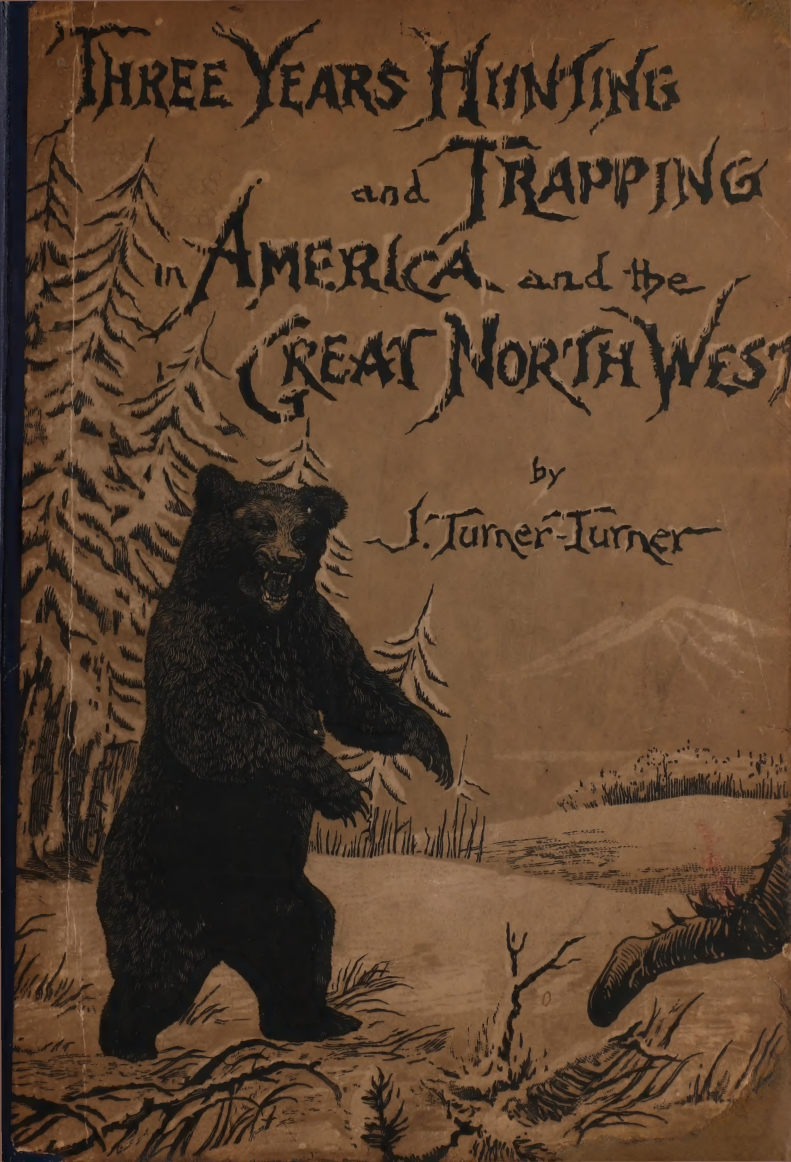
Three Years Hunting and Trapping in America and the Great North West

by

J. Turner-Turner



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Yours truly
J. Thorn-Thorn

Three Years' Hunting and Trapping

IN

America and the Great North-West.

BY

J. TURNER-TURNER.

Dedicated

TO HIS WIFE, HIS CONSTANT COMPANION DURING THESE TRAVELS.

ILLUSTRATED BY

CONSTANCE HOARE.

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Introduction.

SHOULD you anticipate the reading of thrilling adventures, or hair-breadth escapes, it is not in these pages you must seek them, indeed, the author almost doubts whether, if in the absence of such scenes of excitement as usually render a book of interest, he was justified in compiling the following, dealing as it does solely with stern and unromantic facts, in the narration of which the imagination has been curtailed from running riot.

That the casual reader will feel on closing this volume that he has been more than slightly interested is beyond the most sanguine hopes of the author, whose main object is in some degree to remove from the paths of those sufficiently persevering to wade through his experiences, the many pitfalls, disappointments, and inevitable failures which waylay the hunter who seeks for sport in fresh countries. At the same time, the author has endeavoured, by the addition of such little events and incidents as appeared to him likely to prove entertaining, to minimise to a certain degree the monotony of sameness so characteristic of the long winters in a trapper's life; should he by so doing have added yet another failure to his already somewhat lengthy list, he craves the reader's pardon for several wasted hours, and as the only reparation in his power, he offers experiences such as have seldom, if ever, been procured except by professional trappers.

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Rocky Mts
Fr. of Wales I.
Queen Charlotte Sd
Queen Charlotte Is
Nootka I.
Nootka Sound
Clayoquot Sd
Barclay Sd
JUAN DE FUCA STRAIT
C. Flattery
HUNTING CAMPS
Gray Harbour
Shoalwater C.A.B.
C. Disappointment
Columbia R.
Tillamook Bay
Tillamook R.
Fort Simpson
Fort Rupert
Fort Langley
Fort Hope
Fort Kamloops
Fort Alexandria
Fort George
Fort Colvile
Fort Walla Walla
Fort Vancouver
Fort Nisqually
Fort Victoria
Fort Townsend
Fort Steilacoom
Fort Dalles
Fort Simpson
Fort Wrangel
Fort Stikine
Fort Connolly
Fort Taku
Fort Selkirk
Fort Yukon
Fort Halkett
Fort Liard
Fort Simpson
Fort Norman
Fort Good Hope
Fort Anderson
Fort Macpherson
Fort Yukon
Fort Selkirk

ZOO-GEOGRAPHICAL MAP.

Stanford's Geog.l Estab.t London.

ship to procure others, causing us much delay and inconvenience ; nor could this man have legally refused to pass us—the whole proceeding was, we afterwards discovered, simply an attempt to force the usual tip. In respect to bribery, the conduct of the New York Custom House officers is a disgrace to the country, in proof of which statement I will quote our experiences during the three landings we have made in New York. I returned for my baggage next day, armed with the necessary passport, in the form of a $5 bill, which I handed to the man appointed to examine our things. He informed me he was sorry I had been troubled the night before, but that had it been he who had waited on me, he should have made no difficulty, I conclude after-having received the $5, anyway he now made a pretense of opening one trunk, passing everything else regardless of what it contained.

The following year we again found ourselves in the presence of the New York Custom House officers ; being forewarned I presented a $5 bill though I had nothing on which to pay duty, but wished to avoid the delay of making a declaration to the effect that my guns were for my own use, and the saddle second hand. The man declined the bill, saying, "Not now, I will call at your hotel. Which is it?" I replied, "Hoffman House." He asked, "How much are you going to give me?" I told him $ 5. He said, "There is a saddle, you must give me $ 5 more." He then claimed another $ 10 for the guns to which I agreed, and he passed everything unopened, appearing at the hotel in the evening to be paid his exorbitant demand of $ 20.

I now come to our last landing. This time being decidedly poorer, and possibly wiser, I determined to give no tip whatever, and let the officers search our baggage to the bottom if they felt so inclined ; besides, we were away for two years and had plenty of time. I therefore made the necessary declaration about guns, and informed the man told off to examine our things, that we had nothing dutiable. He finally, I think, opened one box, marking all the remainder as free, after which, he continually hung about us in a disagreeable manner as though he wanted something. Presently, what was my surprise when his superior walked up to me, saying, "This man expects something." I asked, "How much, and for what?" He replied, "Oh, half-a-sovereign or so, he has marked all your things without opening them." I said, "He was perfectly welcome to open them," to which he replied, "Well, you had better give him something to get rid of him ; he is a mean little fellow," and with this he strolled off. I suppose if we ever wanted to be passed again, and were recognised, we might kick our heels for hours unattended, but I think these three examples show the disgraceful state of affairs existing at the New York Custom House.

The first thing that struck us on entering the town of New York was the abominable state of the stone pavement in certain thoroughfares, where holes, varying from one to three feet in diameter, and from one to two feet deep, were plentiful. The next objects very trying to a tolerably accurate eye, were the huge wooden telegraph poles, wriggling up like great serpents all along the streets. Once, finding ourselves in New York on a Sunday, we were agreeably surprised at the bright cheerful look of the principal streets when compared with ours in England. This, we discovered, was due to the majority of the shop windows being free from those melancholy and dismal looking shutters, which make one feel when walking in London on a Sunday, as though half the population were dead, and the remainder fever stricken.

After remaining a day in New York we started on our proposed visit to Liberty. How many days the journey occupied I have forgotten, but I distinctly remember that as we neared our destination the pace became slower and slower, until at length, in sheer desperation, we felt inclined to get out and walk to the next depôt. However, we arrived at last, and were most kindly welcomed by my friend and his wife, who fully carried out the Virginian boast of hospitality. Our host soon informed us that he had arranged for a hunting party of about eight to accompany me to the Dagger Springs for a fortnight's hunt, where we should have fine sport, but we saw little anxiety displayed by anyone to further the matter.

CHAPTER II.

THE climate was decidedly warm in Virginia, I found it affected my Schultz powder, a considerable supply of which I had brought with me, to such an extent that it became so powerful, I dared no longer use it. I should remark that in those days this powder had not been brought to the excellent state of perfection of the present date.

At length the time began to hang rather heavily, and the proposed hunt appeared no nearer than it had done some weeks before. I sought in vain for sport. L. and I drove some miles off to a small river where they told us the trout simply jostled one another out of the water: we fished every likely looking eddy and ripple for hours without a rise, at length I gave it up, and took to wandering up and down the bank peering into each fishy looking spot, in the vain endeavour to see a trout, but not even a minnow was in sight; presently I came on an old nigger fishing with an enormous hook on the end of a piece of cord, and a stone for a sinker, the bait being a scarcely perceptible bit of worm somewhere on the hook; he told me he had never caught a fish there, and I was not much surprised. We put up our rods, hitched in the horse, and drove home disgusted, nor were we less so on being informed a few days later that the stream had never held a fish of any description. The game season not having yet commenced, and most of the summer birds having migrated, in order to occupy my time, I was reduced to making a collection of woodpeckers, there being a greater variety of these than any other birds. Their plumage was as yet imperfect; and of all objectionable and tedious little birds to skin I think woodpeckers are the worst, being so constructed that their heads will seldom pull through their necks, consequently the brains, eyes, etc., have to be extracted through the mouth, or by an opening in the skin at the back of the head; but no other employment being at hand, I made a fairly good collection of these, securing several specimens of the giant woodpecker, all of which have been lying in the naturalist's studio ever since. Our Host now took us for a driving tour of four days to see the natural bridge, a quaint freak of nature, the illustration of which is from a photograph.

THE NATURAL BRIDGE, VIRGINIA.

I have since seen a description, wherein it is quoted as the second wonder of America, Niagara being the first. Though I fear, not having previously read this account, we failed to thoroughly appreciate its magnificence. I think a jolting tour would have been a more appropriate designation of our trip, for of rough roads in general, those of Virginia beat any I have ever travelled over. They were originally made by the gun carriages during the war, and have never been repaired since; when one portion of a road becomes quite impassable, the driver simply turns to one side, constructing a fresh way for himself.

It is a remarkable peculiarity in a Virginian, that he never repairs his harness or buggy with anything stronger than a piece of string; the result being that something is always falling off or giving way, in which case more string is applied; this was frequently demonstrated during our drive. We put up at an hotel on James River for the first night. How the proprietor busied himself by feeling the texture of our clothes, examining and enquiring the price of nearly every article upon us; there was no false modesty about Virginians, at least in this respect. We had previously been formally introduced to him, and the customary hand-shaking accomplished—what an abominable American practice this is! Every man you have to do with considers it incumbent upon him to shake you warmly by the hand. I constantly found myself on the first opportunity wiping mine down my clothes, after coming in contact with a more than usually warm or dirty specimen. Our host next joined us at supper in company with his daughter, a young woman much powdered and frizzled, and giving herself considerable airs; her time, we thought, would have been far more profitably spent in the kitchen, where, if instead of frizzling her hair, she had prevented the cook from frizzling the pieces of old cow, or scarcely dead chicken, into stuff like leather, Virginian fashion, our jaws would have been saved much labour. We never have tasted a properly cooked piece of meat in Virginia, or any other part of America, except in first-class hotels. We were luxuriously accommodated with a bedroom to ourselves, so were the others at first, but, at the last moment the proprietor popped a few strangers into theirs. I said we had a room to ourselves, but I am not quite sure we did not share it with the outside public, for there were spaces two feet long and several inches wide between the logs in several places; the completion of such details would be considered superfluous in the eyes of a Virginian architect. Basins here were very scarce; when we had done with ours we placed it outside the door, and it went the rounds.

Next day, before proceeding on our journey, we heard such glowing accounts of the Bass fishing, that we determined to return sometime and spend a few days on the river; during that day's drive a couple of wild turkeys flew up out of the road, one of which, after a bit of a climb, I succeeded in bagging. In the afternoon we reached the object of our excursion, did the natural bridge in correct tourist style, slept at the hotel there, and started on our return journey the following day by a different route. Towards evening we stopped at a log hut in the mountains, and hearing that turkeys were abundant in the vicinity, our host agreed not to start again until the afternoon of the following day, in order that I might spend the morning in a turkey hunt, immediately after breakfast I started up the mountain on which the turkeys were to be found, and I shortly succeeded in killing two, though had I had cartridges specially loaded with large shot, instead of number seven, I should have done much better. Turkey shooting is by no means to be despised, nor are they easy birds to stalk, being

very shy and watchful; though, if you hide behind a bush and call them by squeaking up a pinion-bone of their dead comrade's wing, they may be fooled to any extent, and will come strutting up to you. On this occasion, I walked right into a brood of about eight, most of which flew up all round me. I killed one over my head, and it took me an hour to find him, though he was quite dead and lay within twenty yards. Another fell dead some way off, a third I fired at on the ground at fifteen yards distance, and he flew away, the fourth I took a pot-shot at on a tree—with a similar result. I could presently hear some of the remainder calling in different directions, but was unable to obtain another shot at them. On reaching the summit of the mountain, having deposited my spoil where I could find it again, I managed to knock over what the Virginians call a pheasant, the correct name of which is ruffed grouse; but in America, and especially Virginia, it appears to me that they rarely lose an opportunity of calling everything by its wrong name, and I often think they must have searched the dictionary through to hunt up the most inconvenient words wherewith to express themselves. After killing the grouse, I found on consulting my watch that it was high time to return, and immediately started off with that intention, only, I unfortunately got down the wrong side of the mountain upon which the sun seldom shone, rendering the moss-covered rocks exceedingly slippery; off one of these I finally fell, cutting my hand rather seriously. After being lost for some time I decided that the best course was to get away from the mountain and walk round it until I reached the place I originally started from. This spot I finally discovered, and by the time I had again climbed a considerable portion of the mountain to fetch the turkeys it was getting late; but we were enabled to start in time to reach home that day, and I shortly afterwards discovered that a wild turkey was about the best bird I ever ate. I omitted to mention that in the early stage of my visit, in order to facilitate hunting, I had purchased a horse, which investment necessitated a further outlay in a bridle and saddle; at least it was a contrivance as much like a saddle as they make them in Virginia, with huge wooden stirrups and a hump in front, the object of which I was never able to discover, though with pain I realised its inconvenience on more than one occasion.

I was not particular what kind of a horse I had, provided he could go and was not white or grey, but the only animal for sale at all suited to my purpose was of course nearly white and conspicuous for miles; however, I became his owner at the pretty high figure of forty-five pounds. A more unsuitable beast for hunting than he turned out could not well have been procured. He was hopelessly gun-shy; a shot half a mile off gave him fits, while with a rifle in hand it was no easy matter to mount him. I seldom left him hitched up anywhere but that on my return I was nearly sure to find nothing but his broken bridle, with which I had to tramp back, only to discover that he had arrived at his stables before me. When I left I gave him away, a ready purchaser not being forthcoming, though his former owner, being much grieved at parting with him "as he was quite a pet in the family," had made a point of stating his intention of repurchasing his favourite when I departed.

L. and I next started off for a few days' fishing in James River: the excellent accounts we had heard of it when staying in the hotel the week before had made us very keen on bass-fishing. We engaged the same airy room we had occupied on the previous occasion. A man and boat were procured, and we did no end of fishing, but without obtaining a single rise; they said it was very odd, but that

there must be something the matter with the water. We ought, therefore, to come again a bit later. We finally gave up fly-fishing and tried a worm, resulting in the capture of three perch weighing a few ounces each; after a couple more hours, during which time nothing was caught, we tired of this sport and rowed about after ducks, one of which we killed; but in trying to retrieve it I succeeded in providing myself with an involuntary bath by sliding into the river. On the third day we returned to Liberty with a very poor opinion of the James River bass-fishing.

In the evenings I used to go out shooting what they called bats; Night Jars we term them in England, and I never saw them figuring on a menu there, but the Virginians considered them excellent eating. They literally appeared in swarms just before sunset, and seemed to afford ample sport for the local sportsmen, who were unable to hit anything else. Large yellow larks were plentiful in certain fields; they are about the size of a thrush, good eating, and difficult shooting, generally rising thirty yards off, and flying straight and swift, much resembling the European quail when on the wing

CHAPTER III.

THERE was considerable talk just now respecting the proposed hunt. Our host, who intended joining us for a few days with B—, a farm pupil of his, was ready, but somehow the remaining eight did not appear to be very ardent sportsmen. Accommodation had been arranged for at a farmhouse near the Springs, and the day was settled for the start. I had previously been to see the trophies collected by a man who had taken many hunting trips into the same district as that to which we were bound. During conversation on the one absorbing topic, he suggested that I might like to see the skin of a bear he had shot there. I said, "Yes, immensely," upon which he retired to fetch it, and shortly returned holding up with evident pride the shattered remains of a miserable little second year's cub, literally riddled with shot. This was, as far as I could ascertain, the only result of his hunting.

B. had of late been very busily engaged in equipping himself for the chase. He had bought a lovely brown canvas coat, a cartridge belt and hunting knife, a magnificent new double-barrelled breach-loading gun, remarkably cheap, and a revolver. The long-looked-for day at last arrived, and we made a successful start; the other eight having all backed out of it with one exception, and he said he would join us later on. I had proposed taking L., but as they had an idea in Liberty that a woman was too precious and fragile to be allowed outside the yard gate (they

called their gardens yards, and I'm not sure that it was not the most appropriate term), they so opposed the proposal as being utterly impossible and even dangerous, that she was ultimately left behind. It was a two days ride to the Springs, and putting up the first night in a small town we did not arrive until late on the following evening; two of our horses with sore backs, thanks to the construction of Virginian saddles, which, in spite of the thickest saddle cloths, seldom fail to produce this result. After considerable difficulty we discovered the house where rooms had been prepared, the intense darkness making it almost impossible to distinguish anything off the main roadway. Needless to state, having been in the saddle from early morning, we were fairly hungry and anxiously awaited supper, but great was the disappointment, on my part any way, when they placed before each of us one tiny slice of fried bacon with a very limited supply of bread and tea, in fact, just about enough to make you thoroughly realise how hungry you still were after having finished it, but we got nothing more; so having started a pipe, I commenced to question one of the family who was to help drive the deer and provide some of the dogs for us, as to what sport we were likely to enjoy on the morrow, his replies were so cheering and satisfactory that I soon forgot I had not supped, and began to long for daybreak, though I was eventually destined to long for it far more ardently ere it appeared. He told me that without doubt, unless I missed them, I should kill four or five deer, and that I might expect equally good sport every day I went out, in vain I said I only wanted good heads, he assured me that they shot everything there, including does and fawns, and indeed there was one of the latter in the house at that moment, but it had been killed on the railway track with stones. By the time we had finished smoking, the night being considerably advanced, we requested to be shown our bedrooms and were promptly led upstairs and ushered into one little room with two small beds in it. We asked for the other rooms and our guide replied that there were no more unoccupied, and this was what they considered ample accommodation for eleven people. My host took it for granted that I would share his bed, but as I felt little inclination to sleep with any man I proposed that we should go odd man out who should take the floor, we accordingly tossed, the floor falling to my lot. Therefore, borrowing some blankets and a mattress from the other beds, I should have been exceedingly comfortable there had I not located myself just over some very horrible smell, from whence it came I could not tell, but I soon had other matters to attend to, being attacked apparently by hundreds of fleas. I never was so terribly mauled in my life. The other two were snoring lustily, but I was gratified to see that they were not enjoying a peaceful slumber. They kept turning over and over, something was evidently annoying them intensely, but so tired were they with the long ride as to be incapable of arousing themselves. They were being eaten, I felt sure of it, and this somewhat consoled me for my own sufferings. I lay meditating whether I could stand this state of affairs much longer, when something occurred which decided me to get up and dress, it was only a large rat, and it only walked over my bed, but it quite dispelled any doubts previously entertained as to whether I would remain lying there or no. So hurriedly dressing, I spent the remainder of the night sitting in a straight-backed chair, gazing into the bright moonlight hour after hour until dawn appeared, when I discovered that the horrible smell I had noticed proceeded from a large rats' hole close to the head of my bed. On waking my companions I perceived that so far as

appearances went they were in a far worse plight than I being literally covered with bites on faces and hands. On comparing notes, all agreed that that should be the last night we would spend in so densely populated a house, our resolve being doubly confirmed by the discovery that some niggers had been previously turned out of the room to accommodate us. After a very meagre breakfast, no way superior to the supper of the night before, we started for the hunt, the party consisting of our three selves, a collection of dogs of every variety of breed, all mongrels, but designated as big or fine-mouthed according to the description of noise they made, and two men carrying guns who were to work the dogs and drive the deer past us. After a few miles walk we reached the hunting ground and were carefully posted in the most likely spots. B., who was now described as the man with the pistol, owing to his only weapon being a revolver, for the cheap gun had already commenced to moult, the right hammer having fallen off, no amount of tinkering could induce it to stick on again, he was therefore placed in such a position behind a rock as to render his weapon of service. My host and self were stationed on elevated ridges, commanding a large tract of country, here we sat hour after hour, our ears and rifles cocked, eyes staring and heads working round like owls, not knowing in what direction the game would appear, I might as well, however, have made up for my want of sleep on the previous night, for nothing but woodpeckers and an occasional tomtit put in an appearance, until at length the drivers approached saying the deer must have gone another way, but my impression is, that having placed us, they went home again, calmly returning to relieve us after their dinner. Later in the day, whilst on the look out for some sort of shelter, we fell in with an Englishman who had been spending the summer with his family at the Daggers Springs close by, where he said we should be most comfortable. The hotel had not yet permanently closed for the winter, though all the summer guests had departed, in fact they agreed to remain open as long as we stayed; I therefore sent a message telling L. to join us, which she did in a few days. After several hunts, during which no one but the driver saw anything, we were joined by the only member of all the eight enthusiasts from Liberty who put in an appearance, his presence seemed at once to change the luck, though not for our benefit, on the first and only day he hunted, for he returned home immediately afterwards, two Virginian deer, both bucks, came trotting up to him, and stood ten yards from where he was posted, one he killed, the other he missed, though how he managed to let it escape while handling a gun heavily charged with buckshot, I cannot conceive. I never knew a Virginian sportsman hunt with anything except a gun loaded with shot, and no matter how close his game may approach he rarely does it any serious injury. After a few more unsuccessful days my host and the man with the pistol left us. L., our English friend, and myself daily continued to hunt, ever with the same ill luck, starting soon after daybreak, and seldom returning before dusk, generally riding many miles to the various likely localities. Sometimes we thought we heard the dogs running a deer, but, if so, it never came our way, our friend who had hunted throughout the summer considered himself lucky in having killed one little doe during that period, but never a glimpse of anything larger than a squirrel served to revive our now rapidly decreasing ardour, until at the termination of about three weeks, when returning home from our stands, the long sought animal galloped past L. and myself; neither of us were prepared for so unexpected an event, but rapidly unslinging my rifle I managed to get a snap shot

at the retreating deer, of which little was then visible save its long, white tail flickering through the timber, the only result of my hurried aim was that L. had to walk the rest of the way home, for she knowing the peculiarity of my horse which she was riding, on seeing me unsling my rifle quickly slid off, while the animal, on hearing the report, never waited for her to remount, but betook himself to his stables. Only one other deer did we see during the seven weeks we spent in those mountains, it was under the following unexpected circumstances: We were dining at the hotel when someone brought the news that a deer was being hunted by some dogs, we all hurriedly seized our rifles and ran to the spot—at least, I did—and thoroughly exhausted, I arrived where I had heard the dogs giving tongue at about the same moment that the deer, nearly done, trotted past the others who had quietly remained outside the hotel, affording me the extreme satisfaction of seeing them blazing away straight in my direction, while their bullets going wide of the deer, were still further distant from me, and when I eventually reached the spot the poor beast, a three-year-old buck, was being done to death with rocks in a ditch. Another time our driver started three bears, someone had a shot with the usual result. One day on returning from turkey hunting, I noticed that something unusual had occurred in our hut, which consisted of one log room away from the hotel; on enquiring of L. what was the matter, she replied that having heard me complain that my powder had got damp she thought she might as well dry it, and had, therefore, emptied two one-pound canisters on to a piece of paper in front of a large wood fire, and was sitting over it with two pounds more on her lap, when just as the brilliant idea that sparks are calculated to ignite powder flashed through her mind, the notion was most unpleasantly exemplified by all that on the ground exploding—doing, however, no serious damage beyond the loss of a few eye-lashes and some front hair; had it not fortunately been Schultz powder, I should have been minus the greater part of my outfit.

CHAPTER IV.

I WAS shortly invited to join a hunting party of about thirteen, the scene of operations being a day's journey distant, all seemed, from former experience, most sanguine of a week's good sport. The party assembled in due course on the appointed day, at a spot some fifteen miles from the springs; nor was I much taken with the general appearance of my sporting companions, with one or two exceptions, they were a rough lot, including among them a recently released criminal; one known as "Old Man Kerr," was a nice old fellow and quite a character, dressed in black cloth, with a conical shaped wideawake hat, an evening dress coat and waistcoat, no moustache, and a nanny goat beard. He usually spent his leisure moments squatting on his heels, while whittling a stick with a large jack knife, presenting a perfect picture of the ordinary Yankee caricature. Another, the head of a large tobacco firm, did not impress me with much respect, probably owing to the little I appeared to inspire in him, for he invariably alluded to me as the "blarsted Britisher." The

first night brought me little comfort among my sleeping companions, the two tents were uncomfortably crowded, eight in one and five in another; I was destined to sleep among the majority, but being given the choice of position, I selected an outside place. My immediate neighbour had a bad toothache which he tried to cure by eating raw onions—an onion being a vegetable I cannot even stand when I have eaten it myself. The man next to him chewed in his sleep, and when awake, spat over his head on to the wall of the tent; last of all, Old Man Kerr not feeling well, took an over dose of medicine, under these circumstances I was not sorry when someone called out "daybreak, get up;" in fact, to find that the night had passed so quickly was a pleasant surprise; but the first to look at his watch discovered it to be twelve o'clock with the moon just rising, finally day broke at the usual time, and after a hurried breakfast off lumps of rancid fat bacon, someone having kindly saddled my horse for me, off we started to take up our stands, each of my companions protested that he did not care where he stood, at the same time striving to obtain the best place. After an hour's ride, I hitched up my horse, and was conducted to a spot where I was informed I held an excellent position, there I waited all day on the tip-toe of expectation, when finally being confident that my opportunity for a shot had at last arrived I was disgusted to find that what I had mistaken for a deer, was one of our party who had come to inform me that it was all over, no one had seen anything. On seeking my horse no where could he be found, I was just beginning to fear I had forgotten where I had left him, when I discovered his saddle on the ground, and the broken bridle hanging from the limb to which I had fastened it, he who had so obligingly saddled my beast had buckled the girth to the stirrup leather, the opportunity was too great to be missed by so acrobatically inclined an animal, which had evidently jumped through the girths, broken the bridle in a new place, and trotted back to camp, where I disconsolately followed, bearing what should have been his burden, but fully resolved that never again should he cause me another such unpremeditated tramp, in future a stout cord round his neck effectually secured him, with the option of peaceably remaining where he was left, or certain strangulation in the event of his trying to escape, nor would it have caused me much grief to have discovered him in the latter predicament.

Next evening brought an addition to the party, and our tent being the largest, he was invited to sleep there, but not seeing how I could exist if jammed any flatter than I had been the night before, especially as the new comer was remarkably wide, I elected to sleep outside. Unfortunately I had taken only one blanket with me, but the deficiency in this respect was overcome by the great confidence I placed in an india-rubber bag lined with thick flannel, made expressly for someone as little experienced in such matters as myself. After placing everything I possessed upon and around me, I was with help shaken into the bag, and laid down perfectly helpless. That night the thermometer registered unusually low, the india-rubber froze stiff, and all the air for yards round appeared to blow down the bag which had been placed head to wind, while to add to my trouble one of the men came reeling out of the tent exceedingly drunk; a considerable supply of whisky having been brought by certain sportsmen. This individual owing to the darkness barely saved himself from sprawling over me, in spite of my entreaties that he would go the other way, for I dared not move my arms out of the bag for fear of being unable to replace

them again; up to then that was the worst night I had ever spent, I slept not a wink, being almost frozen, while the bag seemed to act as a refrigerator, causing me frequently to long for a glimpse of its inventor acquiring a similar experience in his own freezing machine. The remainder of the week passed in much the same manner as the first day, except that the additional visitor having left, I took to the tent again. One of our party got a shot and missed. Old Man Kerr was the only one possessing a rifle, a truly formidable weapon to all appearance, being a single barrelled muzzle loader, the barrel of which was some sixteen inches in excess of the longest I had ever previously come across, the whole contrivance must have weighed about twenty pounds. He lost a fine opportunity of missing a deer, but gave us a very good reason for not being quite ready at the immediate time of its appearance.

Being now heartily sick of the whole business, I discovered that important matters necessitated my return to the Springs. The total bag up to the day I left was one fox, I consider the driving of deer with dogs most undesirable and uninteresting, especially at that season when deer take to the water, and are unmercifully slaughtered, thereby affording no kind of sport, besides which, when such a mode of hunting is carried on to any extent, the inevitable result must be to drive them out of the country so disturbed.

I have little doubt that had I followed my own inclination and taken to stalking, or still hunting as it is termed in America, I should have bagged several specimens, especially with the aid of a little snow, but such a process appeared unheard of in this country. After this final effort I looked upon Virginian hunting with any prospect of success as a farce. After arranging to pay our friends at the Springs a visit in Baltimore, from whence I was promised some good wild fowl shooting on the Chesapeake Bay, we returned to Liberty. I fear we could scarcely conceal our disappointment from our Host, who was much disturbed at our having determined to leave in a few days, but my last expedition had thoroughly convinced me of the folly of any longer seeking even average sport in those parts, and I felt annoyed with myself for having wasted nearly three months without securing a single head of the most graceful deer of America. The only approach to sport I experienced at all was while turkey hunting, though I deemed a trip to Virginia rather too prolonged a journey for the poor satisfaction of crawling after a few gobblers.

During the interval before our departure I participated in a day's game shooting with two local sportsmen. The partridges, as they call them, and the rabbits, which would be more correctly termed hares, were by no means plentiful, nor was this to be wondered at in a place where every nigger carried a gun.

Our bag consisted of about eight partridges and five or six rabbits, but I don't fancy either of my companions touched feather or fur throughout the day. I only once during my stay saw and killed a woodcock, it was a remarkably small variety, being no more than half the size of our English bird.

I cannot help smiling when I picture myself packing up the trophies collected during those three months' hunting, one wild cat, three foxes, one racoon, one pair of deer's antlers, two points, killed with rocks, and sundry small birds, the latter being our only contribution. With such results, terminated the hunt to which I had so looked forward, and from which I had anticipated the most glorious of sport, and I doubt much if a more disappointed mortal ever laid aside his rifle. During my visit I

tasted three new dishes: Opossum, which I did not care for, grey Squirrels I thought good, and Night-jars decidedly bad.

The people of Virginia and their surroundings appeared to us some fifty years behind the age, though to have hinted at such an undesirable condition would doubtless have given dire offence; yet on every hand we were struck with their marvellous backwardness; it seemed as though every novel improvement had extended over half a century in the course of filtering into the country. There seemed, too, a widely spread anxiety, especially on the part of the women, to proclaim themselves of old families and good breeding; no delicacy was employed in bringing about a suitable topic, wherewith to lead up to so rash an announcement, it usually took the form of a statement during the first quarter of an hour's acquaintance, and how jealous and naturally suspicious these aspirants became—and what had not that war of twenty years before to answer for—what a godsend, too, it now proved to them—what abler scapegoat could be found, every calamity—real or imaginary—was heaped upon its broad shoulders. A Virginian, if deprived of his war would, I believe, be overwhelmed by the weight of his personal afflictions; what proud, joyous, careless beings they appeared to have been "befo' the war;" yet I often wondered if most of those whom I saw were not considerably better off in 1883 than they or their forefathers had ever been twenty years previously. I trust, should these notes ever find their way into the hands of our Virginian friends, they will not think us ungrateful. I simply write that which impressed itself on our minds, and we shall ever remember with pleasure the many kindnesses and hospitalities we received during our visit, and we also freely forgive them for accusing us of speaking with an English accent, an accomplishment we felt rather proud of than otherwise.

CHAPTER V.

WE now proceeded to spend a fortnight with our Baltimore friends, with whom we passed a most enjoyable time, L. being entertained with dinners and dances nearly every night. The people we found charming, and indeed it was difficult to imagine them Americans, with manners and speech so English, though one elderly man, at a dinner party one night, rather alarmed me for the safety of his reason by appearing in an evening dress-coat and waistcoat, dark grey trousers, and a sailor-knot tie; nor does stiff punch at an evening reception, though very excellent, quite meet with one's English notions of a light and refreshing draught in place of claret-cup. I was only destined to take part in one dinner, and missed the other festivities, being away most of the time far more suitably occupied in duck-shooting on the Chesapeake Bay, where the sport was arranged in the following fashion:—A club existed consisting, of course, of a limited number of members, who occupied a certain stretch of the shore, where a comfortable house was built, and a man installed who attended to and cooked for the members, and most excellent eating these ducks were, owing, I believe, to sea-celery contributing largely to their food. Each member was allowed to take one friend to shoot with him. The first morning we turned out at such an hour as would ensure our reaching the Blind before daybreak, and pretty cold work the first two hours usually were, but the ducks came whizzing over our

heads just before dawn, soon providing sufficient work to engage all our spare time. Thousands and thousands of them strung past. Though from being constantly shot at they rather swerved at the gaze. The first day brought forth the largest flight we saw, and, as ill luck would have it, the leading gunmaker in Baltimore thought fit to supply me with a hundred old cartridges, which must at some former period have got wet. Not one would go into the single four-bore I had borrowed for the occasion, without punching and hammering, while all had to be rammed out. Imagine one's feelings during a two-hours' struggle with refractory cartridges, while an almost continuous stream of ducks were passing, with the result of getting off one shot for every three or four which would have been fired in the ordinary course of events; while to further lessen our bag my friend's gun did not suit him, and was too lightly loaded. But for this, and the refractory cartridges, our bag should have numbered at least one hundred and fifty head of ducks, whereas we only gathered fifty, losing a considerable quantity which drifted or swam out of sight, for in case of scaring those coming it is best not to retrieve the dead birds until the termination of the flight, by which time, if there is any tide running, as there was in our case, a large percentage are lost. The bald-headed eagles, too, proved great robbers, constantly swooping down and carrying off our dead and wounded, always apparently prefering the canvas-backs, of which there were a very limited quantity, the majority consisting of red-headed widgeon. Each day much resembled the first, except that I changed my cartridges, while to equalise matters the ducks never appeared in such numbers again. After the morning flight we used to try decoying with about fifty wooden ducks, which had been moored on the water in front of the Blind the night before, but through absence of wind this plan did not work well, though those birds which were attracted afforded very pretty shooting, nor had we much success tolling. Plenty of swans were to be seen in the distance, but none came within reach. I distinguished eleven varieties of ducks, the only kinds among them that I had met with in England being Mallard, Red-Headed Widgeon, Pintail, Goosander, and Merganser, though the two latter can hardly be termed ducks. Being only able to obtain the local names of the American species I refrain from quoting them. Owing to the fascinations of the Bay, and the hospitality of our friends, we protracted our stay longer than had originally been intended, most unwillingly taking our departure after a very enjoyable visit, eventually reaching New York *en route* to England.

CHAPTER VI.

THE *Celtic* being the first homeward bound boat, we engaged berths in her without delay, and soon found ourselves once more at sea, where all went well for a day and a half, when suddenly while sitting in the saloon we were alarmed by a peculiar bumping which shook the vessel from stem to stern, the feeling being exactly as though she were gliding over a half sunken wreck, our suspicions of something having gone wrong were soon confirmed by hearing a volume of steam blown off, while the report that the main shaft had broken quickly spread.

Few of us realized at that moment how serious an accident this may prove to a large vessel, and none of us dreamt that it portended imprisonment for a month,

with, as it happened, the not very remote chance of being wrecked in the meantime, for until the screw, which had become jammed could be released, the vessel declined to answer her helm, nor was this accomplished for I think about twenty-four hours. All the while we were drifting before a stiff breeze on to a lee shore, though the passengers were in happy ignorance of the fact; however, a gale from the direction in which we had been rapidly drifting soon arranged matters differently, for in a short time we found ourselves a hundred or so miles at sea with several sails short, which, probably from age, were unable to withstand the severe strain; by this time the screw had been eased, and the unwieldy craft steered moderately well, although it was found impossible to keep her in the course. At midnight, within a few days of the accident, we sighted a German steamer, and dispatched a boat in a heavy sea with orders to arrange for a tow back to New York, but after a couple of hours absence, the Purser, who had accompanied those volunteering to undertake this decidedly risky expedition in so heavy a sea as was then running, returned stating that he had made an offer of £10,000 to the Captain of the *Gellert*, who declined the danger of towing us for two days along a coast with which he was unacquainted, but promised to stand by us if necessary, which offer was declined, doubtless the promise of so large a sum for a tow back to New York will strike the reader, like myself, as being exorbitant, though perhaps the fact of our being laden with bars of silver may have had something to say to it, though how the other could resist such a temptation I know not, and have often doubted the actual truth of the statement. For about two weeks after this, being completely out of the track, we fell in with no vessel of any description. After being at sea for some three weeks a freight steamer was one day signalled for the purpose of transferring some of the passengers who were most anxious to reach England, ourselves among the number. As it was found she could only accommodate four persons, lots were drawn, and the lucky four proceeded to pack their satchels to leave us. The last we saw of them was too ludicrous a sight to be easily forgotten, for while the boat was alongside, and just as the last of its passengers wearing a top hat had got in, the receding wave having left the gunwale below some extension on the *Celtic's* side, the next wave seized the opportunity to all but capsize the boat, half filling her, a truly miserable picture they all presented, each man sitting in water up to his knees, having donned their best preparatory to landing in a few days at Liverpool, and no luggage, with the exception of hand bags, being permitted them, some of which the unfortunate owners were holding upside down, whilst a stream of water poured forth, how to dry themselves with comfort must have, even at that moment, weighed heavily on their minds, and I much doubt if anything beyond the bare necessaries of life existed on board the steamer. Food had of late become worse and worse, in fact we had given up attempting to eat anything called fresh, and the salt provisions were decidedly bad, having been ready and waiting many a year I should say, for such an opportunity as the present one, though at the commencement we had fared sumptuously, for all who had provided themselves with Christmas gifts, such as oysters and canvas-backs, as presents to friends in England, had handed them over to the culinary department rather than allow them to spoil, gradually every description of drink had disappeared, including fresh water, but a few knowing ones anticipating this had privately bought up the remaining store, proposing to spend a gay time among themselves; great then must

have been their disappointment when, at the last moment, they received orders from the purser to return the wine, which was shared by those who desired it; then came condensed water which for the first few days was disgusting, but after a bit it either improved or we became more accustomed to it. We had long been reduced to four lights in the saloon, then two, and were threatened with total darkness in a day or so, meanwhile we were gradually creeping towards home, some days we even did as much as nine knots an hour, of course running before a pretty stiff breeze, finally when within about three hundred miles of Ireland, which distance was as near as our captain dared approach, we were overtaken by the *Germanic*, she immediately took us in tow, providing food, drink, and oil in abundance. She also did us another good turn by relieving us of a most obnoxious young man of the 'Arry type, hailing from Liverpool, who throughout the voyage had been a constant source of annoyance to the Captain and several of the passengers, and whose insolence had become so intolerable that the Captain when he ordered him off the ship informed him that had it been a pig boat instead of the *Germanic* he would have had him placed on board. I doubt if anyone felt more relieved on reaching Liverpool than I who had been compelled to endure a month of what I detested even for a week, with the addition of worse weather than I had ever previously encountered, it being at one period, for three consecutive days, impossible to remain seated anywhere without holding on; our passengers, too, as a whole were a most uninteresting lot, though to one of them I probably owe the enjoyment of really excellent sport, for being so encouraged after my late complete failure by his account of the Rocky Mountains hunting, I determined to take a trip there the following fall, which determination was successfully carried out. Before bidding farewell to the *Celtic*, I must say a word in acknowledgment of her excellent qualities as a fine sea boat. Though rolling heavily she behaved splendidly, while her Captain was no doubt amply recompensed by the congratulations of her owners, on having safely beaten all previous records of a similar feat which for distance had never been exceeded on the Atlantic by so large and unwieldy a vessel under the usual scanty supply of canvas.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY in August, 1884, I again found myself out of my element, this time a passenger by a Guion Line boat, and a most inferior one too, the attendance and cooking being very indifferent, with a general appearance of dirt and disregard for comfort. When crossing on the previous occasion, hearing that passengers were not allowed to carry cartridges with them, I thought it best to hand mine over to the Purser of the *City of Rome*, requesting that they might be placed in the magazine. Honesty proved a bad policy on that occasion, for the said officer in spite of all entreaties sent them ashore at Queenstown, and although I wrote a note to ensure their immediate despatch, I never received them until about two months after, though, as the reader is aware, I was not destined to experience any inconvenience from their loss, but in case a similar mishap should befal another under circumstances which might seriously affect the pleasure of his trip, I should advise him to act as I now do, namely, secrete all cartridges, and mention the fact of possessing any to no one, or he may find himself landed in America with an English express, and no possibility of obtaining cartridges for it, with the only alternative of purchasing a Winchester, with which he may pump away on a large animal to his heart's content, without in all probability seriously injuring it, though for accurate shooting at deer or other small game I can imagine such a weapon to be much appreciated. Little of interest occurred during the passage; of course the inevitable pool on the run of the ship took place daily, and the equally inevitable though more tedious concert, on which occasion someone is certain to make such a helpless fool of himself that it is positive misery to remain in the saloon. Icebergs were always said to have been passed at night, when they could not be perceived, and the real or imaginary whale was occasionally seen. The only other excitement is usually on Sunday, when every clergyman on board asserts his intention of preaching, and as they all have something very appropriate and refreshing to deliver, regardless of the impossibility of all preaching at once, those who are unable to obtain the saloon console themselves with any audience they can muster in some other part of the ship. I remember a lady on the *City of Rome* suggesting that the funnels would afford suitable accommodation for them.

Thus, after a hum-drum existence of eight or nine days, we were duly landed, and having feed the Custom House officials, arranged for the earliest possible start by train, our proposed destination being the Big Horn Mountains, a small branch of the Rockies in Wyoming, in order to reach which, the nearest point to alight at is Custer Depot, and from thence by stage to Tongue River, which flows at the foot of

the Big Horn. On the following day, after landing, we secured our tickets at the hotel, a most convenient arrangement, by which means luggage is duly checked, which necessitates your troubling no further about it until you reach your destination; indeed, in all probability, it is not even in the same train with you, but will, you may rest assured, be waiting you on your arrival. This system of checking luggage is decidedly successful and a great relief from all anxiety, though the unavoidable delay in finally securing it at the termination of one's journey, greatly mars an otherwise successful system, while the almost total absence of porters is a frequent source of annoyance, and far more so is the disgraceful manner in which everything is smashed, no matter of what material it may be constructed, unless it is too large to be lifted, and made to run on its own wheels like ladies arks. I have seldom seen a porter place a box down in any manner more gentle than by throwing it straight off his shoulders to the ground. Having taken all our small packages with us into the car, punctually, as to time, we glided out of the station (or as they term it, depot). Personally, I never feel half so comfortable in these luxurious, over-decorated, and spacious cars as I do in our own comparatively cosy little railway carriages, and when bedtime arrives and you have your curtains carefully pulled, someone passing, always at the most critical moment, is certain to lose his or her balance, and after vainly endeavouring to steady themselves against the receeding curtain, having ruthlessly exposed you to the public gaze, ram their hand into your mouth, and then sit on you. Of course the most profuse apologies follow, but of what avail? The best means to avoid anything of this description (and something similar to what I have described, nearly always occurs,) is to previously engage the small drawing-room. There is generally one or more on each train, it accommodates three persons if necessary, and you have it entirely to yourselves at a small additional expense; which, if you value your comfort, or wear a wig, you will not grudge. I remember nothing of importance taking place before reaching St. Paul where we created considerable surprise, on arriving at the hotel, by ordering baths; apparently such an unusual necessary had not been realized for ages. After a lengthened search the bath-room key was found, and with still greater difficulty the taps were induced to turn, when a small trickle of rusty water made its appearance. We were delayed for two days, by hearing that the stage at Custer had been engaged for the day on which we imagined we had secured it. St. Paul is a miserable town to find one's self stranded in; therefore after securing a few requisites, and paying a visit to the Bank, where they promptly cashed me a fifty pound note, an obligation the Chicago Bank managers had declined to confer upon me, politely stating after a minute inspection that the note looked better than some they had seen, but at the same time they considered the risk too great, we made enquiries as to the best possible means of whiling away our spare time, with the result that we determined to have a day's fishing on Bear Lake, which was reached after a short railway journey. The sport was not grand; we caught a few quaint-looking fish, of the names of which I have not the remotest idea, being eventually caught ourselves in a heavy thunder-storm which necessitated the earliest possible return to St. Paul. This we left on the following day.

During our journey we were slightly delayed, being able to preceive the object of our hinderance lying by the side of the track in the form of an overturned locomotive with a large hole knocked in it, and a few railway cars in the same not very unusual position in this part of America. The day before reaching Custer, we passed great

quantities of blue-winged teal, which rose in hundreds on our approach, every little pond and puddle being thickly covered with them.

The railway officials employed in the cars, exhibited as usual to a disagreeable extent, the free and easy style so characteristic of the nation, but none the less ruffling to an English temperament, they placed themselves on half your seat, threw their arms along the back of it, and with feet on the opposite seat they would either condescend to speak to you or not, as they happened to feel inclined; even the nigger, whose business it was to make the beds, and otherwise attend to the comforts of the passengers, was always to be found in a somewhat similar position, only usually by himself upside down and asleep. These latter can, however, make themselves very useful on occasions, and I do not think a tip on changing trains or at the end of the journey is thrown away on them, they even say "thank you" on receipt of it. While stopping at some station, the official from the baggage department informed me that I had better come and look after my things, I complacently accompanied him, thinking that the checks were required for a transfer, but he simply pointed out, scattered in every direction amongst the other passengers luggage, the whole contents of a strong deal case, bound with iron, constructed and packed by a London gun maker expressly for the journey; it had orginally contained my rifle, and all appliances connected therewith, except cartridges, for a three months' hunting trip, and now, owing to the disgraceful treatment this unusually strong case had received, it was simply smashed beyond repair, as also were some of the contents. Having but a few seconds to spare, ere the train started, I huddled as much as I could into the shattered remains of the box; being compelled to returned to my car with all the small things in my hands and pockets. I am at a loss to recommend anything of sufficient strength to ensure the safety of guns, I would therefore advise that such articles should share the same car with their owner, as mine have ever done since, excepting on one occasion when an officious railway servant refused to allow me to take a gun into the car and walked it off, charging eventually double freightage for looking after it. On entering the wild and unsettled districts, I constantly found myself peering into the distance in the vain endeavour to discover the antelope, which are still occasionally to be seen, though the vast herds of buffalo frequently observed only a few years ago, have entirely disappeared never more to cheer the heart of the hunter *en route* to his hunting ground. I doubt if, from a train, a single buffalo will ever be seen again, unless it be a tame one accompanied by domestic cattle. These I have seen and imagined to be wild until instructed to the contrary. To me, watching the prairie dogs affords a constant source of interest. For miles and miles we passed through town after town of them. Queer little things, more marmot than dog, sitting up with forepaws hanging, as though begging, or standing over a hole accompanying each shrill squeak with a quick jerk of the tail, until with one final squeak they suddenly disappeared down a hole as though the earth had given way from under them.

We finally reached Custer at about five in the morning. The stage on which we had previously engaged two seats (it only holds four persons including the driver) was soon in readiness. After watching our baggage packed, we began to wonder where we were to stow ourselves, for no inch of space remained except actually on the seat, so constructed as to barely accommodate two abreast, and on this we were obliged to perch ourselves, baggage behind and underneath us, with knees touching our chins, and

shins rammed against the drivers seat, in which position we were to spend about twenty-four hours on end. Nor can I do justice to the misery of this day and night's drive without describing the vehicle, the true name of which I believe to be Buck-board. It is about the size of a T. cart, with travellers' seat immediately behind the

driver's, both facing the horses. There had once, I think, been springs, but owing to wear and overweight they had long since gone flat, and could only be recognised when jolting over rocks, on which occasions the body of the conveyance lifted to its full extent, coming down with a thud on the supports where it usually rested. It would never have occurred to me, judging from the motion, that springs had formerly existed had it not been that once having almost jerked off to sleep, I was painfully re-called to my senses by finding that my outside foot had strayed from the cart and (during the interval when the body had left its support for a moment) had placed itself in the vacant place under the spring, the result being that when the next boulder was encountered the shock was less perceptible than usual to the others, but affected me far more than any had done previously, nearly smashing my foot and ruining a new pair of knee boots. The by no means easy task of stowing away all our baggage being completed, with a curt word of encouragement to the horses from our Jehu, pronounced Guida, signifying 'get up,' off we started. The jerking and jolting were not so much heeded by us at first, our attention being fully occupied with this new mode of travelling. The journey was unbroken with the exception of an occa-sional change of horses, at which times we were served with a very fair repast. After the first few hours the cramped position in which we were fixed became decidedly painful, but not an inch could we move for relief. Ere long every rock was regarded in the far distance with dread, and when about to come in contact with such an obstacle, an involuntary bracing of the body and a spasmodic clinch of the teeth took place; there was, however, no remedy, we had to grin and bear it, but experienced a welcome relief when we arrived at the Ferry under Fort Custer, by being at liberty to get out and stretch ourselves, for we were to remain about an hour at the Fort where I expected news of my hunter. We embarked on the ferry which was very dodgily arranged to work backwards and

forwards on a rope, being propelled by the force of the stream acting on the boat at an angle, the river was not wide, and in a couple of minutes we were landed, and commencing a short climb up to the Fort named after the ill-fated General who, together with his whole force, was slaughtered on a small hillock close by, by the Indians who attacked in such vast numbers that but one man is said to have escaped to tell the tale. The spot is now fenced in with railings which encircle all that remains of an entire command. Having arrived at the Fort, after passing much closer to a chained grizzly than we should have done had we known of its existence, our first enquiry was for news of our hunter, who had arranged to meet us there with his outfit; very much to our relief this all-important individual soon turned up, having been sent by Bob Stewart, whom I had engaged, but who, not being ready on account of the Indians having stolen his horses at the moment of his setting out, had sent the personage then before me, who rejoiced in the name of Uncle Billie. He was an elderly man whose face was the most complete wreck imaginable, his injury having been caused by a collision with the heels of a horse, after such a blow, recovery must have been miraculous. The lower part of his forehead and frontal bones were smashed in, one eye was blind and located where his cheek must have formerly resided, the other eye was an inch higher up, both cheek bones were driven in, and from the depth of his face, the end of his nose scarcely protruded. A truly repulsive sight was Uncle Billie, and for a hunter, a man to be avoided as worse than useless. He informed me that he had already been waiting ten days, (his wages were £1 a day) and that it would take him three days more to get his outfit together, at the expiration of which time he would join us at Tongue River. As the stage passed there, and I had heard good reports of the trout fishing, we decided to make that our halting place and look after ourselves until he arrived. At Custer we met the first genuine Indians (Crows) we had yet seen; they appeared a fine race, and fairly good looking. Our driver having looked us up for a start, we resumed our perches and our journey. Clouds of dust, a burning sun, a miserably uncomfortable seat, and an everlasting prairie, were not quite the comforts one would desire, but night would soon relieve us of the sun at any rate. Towards the end of that day we passed through the Crow Reservation, where the American Government starves the Indians through the medium of its agents, under the pretence of providing for their welfare. Into a few of the various robberies committed by these agents on the Reservation, I was initiated by a discharged servant, formerly employed in the business, but who was now one of our outfit. He informed me that by the time provisions reached the Indians, instead of their obtaining the allotted allowance they seldom receive more than a third, and that, frequently so bad, as to be uneatable. The various agents, having received full Government allowance, buy damaged food cheap and pocket the difference, pilfering about two-thirds of the sum entrusted to them, and supposed to be expended on the Indians. Little wonder is it therefore that these Indians on the Reservations are literally driven by starvation into rebellion. We noticed occasional, though very limited efforts on their part at agriculture, and were particularly struck by the peculiar fashion among them of cutting out the front and back of their trousers, leaving the legs suspended by narrow strips to the belts.

Perhaps this is merely for summer wear. One Indian had decorated his head gear, apparently much to his satisfaction, with a paper flag on a piece of wire, such as is usually to be seen on a Christmas-tree. Ere we were clear of the Indian lines, darkness had set in, and we began to endure intense discomfort. It became bitterly cold. Being unaware that there is a considerable frost in those parts on most nights at this season, we were by no means adequately provided with wraps. Sleep was out of the question; should we doze for a moment, the instant the muscles relaxed, a violent jolt nearly jerked our heads off, and if we rested them on anything, matters became worse, for they flew up and came down with a crash somewhere else much harder. Though sleep was thus denied to us, I noticed on several occasions the driver was more fortunate, and but for the horses' thorough knowledge of the way we must inevitably have been upset; once or twice when to overturn would have resulted in a considerable drop of perhaps twelve feet. I took upon me to rouse the man, who appeared by no means grateful for my interference. During the journey we had changed drivers at a great disadvantage, the second being as surly and grumpy a specimen as one would be likely to come across. Next morning, at about seven, he pulled up on the banks of a small river, and told us it was Tongue River, adding "Where would we like to get out?" One spot being to us the same as another, we replied, "Here," and after everything was removed, and the instrument of twenty-four hours' torture had disappeared, we stood alone on the outskirts of a vast prairie. Our little pile of neat packages presenting an appearance so out of harmony with the surroundings as to look utterly ridiculous, reminding me of a caricature I had once seen of a missionary traversing some desert, wearing a tall hat, and carrying a huge carpet bag in his hand. Its a queer sensation when you find yourself for the first time in your life entirely alone, with everything dependent on your own exertions. Thus were we now situated. Fortunately there was abundance of timber at hand, for to select a spot where such a necessary existed had never occurred to me, any more than had the fact that we were without the means of cutting it, but an axe was superfluous, for plenty of dead wood lay about. The first thing to be done was to pitch the tent; this we erected on a small cliff at the edge of the river. The ground was so hard that the pegs declined to penetrate sufficiently to obtain a reliable hold, but being quite satisfied so long as it stood up, we commenced getting things in order; after which we decided that something to eat was requisite, so having nothing but flour and butter, which latter had melted and run all over the saddle, I left L. to make some bread, and started with my gun to procure a bird of some sort, so far I was successful, shortly returning with a duck, but only to find that in her attempt to make a loaf, L. had melted the bottom out of the only saucepan, the nearest approach to bread being something looking like a piece of putty in the ashes, where as a last resource she had endeavoured to bake the dough. However, having some biscuits we thought they would very well take the place of bread, and commenced to cook the duck, we boiled that in the tea-pot, as it appeared the easiest way, but by the time it was done, the sun had become so hot, and such quantities of flies surrounded us that neither felt inclined to eat it; in fact, we never did eat it, but took to fishing instead. For the next three days we had the finest sport conceivable. Trout and grayling abounded in various turns of the river, weighing up to five pounds, and seizing greedily almost any fly we liked to put on, so long as it was not a small

one. How we treasured the only four large ones we possessed, and with what warnings against the impossibility of replacing it, I doled the last but one out to L., every likely looking spot was certain to hold a fish, and equally sure was that fish to afford sport. We caught occasionally, with a spoon, in some deep hole a fish something of the nature of a Pike. Frequently we found ourselves with more trout than we could (in one journey) carry back to camp where we dried and salted them, intending to take them into the mountains; but on the second day after starting the cook, rather than be bothered with the packing, left them all behind, which much disgusted us, after the hours we had wasted in the dirty work of cleaning and curing them. A very merry three days glided away on Tongue River, where in a broiling sun standing up to our waists in the icy cold water, and clothed in the airiest of attire, we landed trout after trout, with an occasional grayling by way of variation; some of the latter scaled as high as six pounds. We felt almost sorry when Uncle Billie put in an appearance, and thereby ended the best fishing we had ever enjoyed. I would strongly recommend anyone travelling within reach of Tongue River, even if it takes him out of his way, to sacrifice a day or so to his rod, though I cannot answer for his success in all parts of the river. We very nearly lost our tent on the first night, for on being awoke by a heavy thunderstorm, I found the wind, which had suddenly risen, was blowing our lightly secured shelter about in all directions, vainly I regretted my carelessness in not properly pegging it down in the first instance, being now obliged to fumble about in the dark and rain; but by dint of hammering at the pegs, and holding down the canvas until the storm abated, we were only just enabled to save it from blowing over the cliff and into the river. Our outfit was now nearly complete, consisting of eight pack horses, Uncle Billie, Bill the Cook, and Rube to look after the horses, of which we still required three more, Uncle Billie asserting (whether true or not, I cannot say) that on the previous night some Indians had stolen three of his, but I rather expect they strayed away, he having a knack of leaving them much to their own devices, seldom troubling to hobble them, which negligence ultimately caused us a frequent delay of several hours on moving camp. It was agreed that he should spend the remainder of the day of his arrival by going to some place he knew of and purchasing the necessary horses, which he did, returning with three animals, one being a smart little pony, and very decent looking, was reserved for L.; the next was a rather handsome horse, which I at once decided on for myself, but on attempting to mount him, I quite as quickly concluded he would not suit me, for having previously belonged to a Cow Boy, he had acquired the trick of bolting the instant you lifted your foot to place it in the stirrups, and not being a Cow Boy, this prized accomplishment in his eyes placed a barrier against the horse being of the slightest use to me for hunting, it was, therefore, destined for Bill, who became so accustomed to being run away with, that in the end he grew to like the sensation, and eventually bought the horse from me. The remaining animal was a brute, the only creature I think I really ever hated, there was no vice about him, I wished there had been, he was simply a stolid lump of flesh and bone, and his eyes were always half closed, while his huge lower lip hung down, its weight apparently preventing his mouth from shutting by two inches; moreover, he was gifted with the power of making deliberate grimaces, and he used throughout the day, at intervals, to sigh heavily. I am unaware whether insanity occurs in horses, but if so, undoubtedly that animal was off his head. Uncle Billie had given a higher price for him than for either of the others, on

account of his being what they termed a work horse, but it was possible to mount him, and, as I thought, perhaps we could get along together, I was, therefore, forced to make the best of the bargain.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning was devoted to packing the horses, which was not accomplished until a late hour, everything being in disorder, and several of them unused to a pack. If you were never heartily disgusted with the result of anything you have undertaken to accomplish, you certainly will be on the first occasion you take upon yourself the decidedly difficult task of successfully fixing a pack, it is simply maddening to see everything falling off or leaking out, no matter how carefully you have secured it. Unless he has taken a lesson or two, I defy anyone to succeed in packing for the first few times, even the oldest hands cannot provide against occasional loosenings or burstings; often and often were we delayed by one turning over, on which occasion the whole business of repacking had to be gone through over again, for to otherwise endeavour to rectify the mishap is so much waste of time. The first day we made but little progress, but the main object on such occasions is to get a start, no matter if you are obliged to camp within the hour, it greatly simplifies matters for the morrow. On the following day we met a liar, not an unusual occurrence in America, he told Uncle Billie of a spot about fifty miles off where the bears were just then in numbers. As I was more anxious to obtain bears than anything else, we accordingly turned our steps in the direction indicated by the liar and known to Uncle Billie. This spot was entirely out of our way, necessitating our leaving the pass into the mountains behind us. In a couple of days we reached the desired spot, where, after two more days careful search we could find no indication of a bear having been about for months. On this wild goose chase a whole week had been lost, it was also the only occasion on which any Indians bothered us. One evening while having our supper we heard a couple of them roll off their horses outside the tent, immediately after the canvas was drawn aside, and in they walked, seating themselves on the ground, watching us eating, like hungry dogs, until we began to feel so greedy, that for very shame we offered them some food, handing a knife and fork to one, and a knife to the other. The possessor of the fork had not the remotest idea what use to make of it, but was quickly relieved from his dilemma by the other stealing it on the first opportunity, then after watching us attentively he took up a piece of bacon in his fingers, stuck it on the fork and placed it in his mouth with an air of superiority. After they had eaten all the scraps, and began to show signs of sleeping with us we called to Rube, who spoke their language, to tell them to be off, with which request they reluctantly complied, and we turned in, but had hardly gone to sleep ere we were awakened by someone crawling under the back of the tent, this turned out to be one of our late guests, who having been observed by the men was hastily collared by the legs and withdrawn, after which he was unceremoniously sent about his business. We were afterwards warned on no account to give Indians food or in all likelihood we would have much trouble in getting rid of them. Moreover

they would probably call upon us again in company with the whole tribe. We now made for the pass by which to ascend the mountain. On the first day after leaving the prairie, one of the horses, called Papoose on account of his youth, distinguished himself by running under a bough and tearing a hole in the sugar sack, after which disgraceful piece of carelessness he declined to be caught, while the sugar was all the time running out in a continuous stream until three parts was lost, leaving a long white trail on the ground. We had an Indian pack pony, a remarkably strong and wiry little beast called "Injun," on whose back, I suppose on account of his nationality, was invariably placed the heaviest and most cumbersome load, yet this animal could tire all the others out, never appearing the least done himself; nor when the opportunity offered, did he ever pass a tree without indulging in a scratch. It is wonderful the load these Indian ponies will carry, I have seen a buck, his squaw, and a papoose on a little miserable beast which looked as though the weight of one person would have broken it down, yet no doubt had there been room another addition to the Indian's family would have occupied the vacant space; they think little of taking their family and household effects deposited on two poles, harnessed each side of a pony, spliced together behind with cross bars and dragged along the ground, the buck himself riding. I soon

found it utterly impossible to keep up with the others, my horse could not even walk as fast as the slowest of them, and as huge Cow Boy's spurs with rowel spikes three quarters of an inch long had not the slightest effect on him, I determined to take one of the pack horses, and put mine in his place. The animal did nothing but sigh, appearing to have experienced at some period an overwhelming grief, the memory of which he was unable to shake off, so after consulting Uncle Billie as to the best horse to select out of the very mixed lot, I was provided with a large black animal called Nigger, formerly a troop horse, having in that capacity received a rifle bullet through one hind leg, besides which he was stiff jointed in the fetlock of the other, and a lamer animal all round never was ridden; but he was a fine old horse and a luxury when compared with the other, which I was pleased to see with a good lumpy pack on his back. But a marvellous change had taken place in him, though still slower in every motion than his companions, he appeared in mortal dread of being left behind, constantly coming blundering along at a gallop, hustling everything out of his way to try and get in front for a bit. One day some time after this we were

struggling through a wood of fallen timber (a by no means easy task even on foot), when we suddenly heard a most horrible shindy, accompanied by a hideous sort of bellowing in the distance, presently my old enemy appeared, being unable to jump anything at all, he had been left behind unnoticed, and now came tearing along minus his pack, evidently bent on running amuck, charging straight into timber breast high, over which, unless it gave way, he fell headlong. In this manner he dashed straight through us, and badly we should have fared had we been in his way, he appeared perfectly mad with fear. The next question was what to do with him, we had all got into an inextricable fix amongst the fallen timber where Uncle Billie had lost his way, we therefore tied him up to a tree intending to camp immediately on getting clear of the wood, and then returning for him and his pack, but it took us some hours longer to get out of that mass of spillicans, and by the time we camped everyone had forgotten the horse, until he refreshed our memory by dashing into camp sweating and trembling with fear and exertion, how he ever managed to get loose was a marvel, his pack was discovered next day at a spot where he had taken an unusually high header over a fallen tree.

CHAPTER III.

WE wandered through the mountain for about a fortnight before striking any game, and I now began to realize the worthlessness of Uncle Billie as a hunter. Nothing would induce him to diverge from the regular trail, along which year after year, hunters have been accustomed to escort their parties, and which from the amount of tins lying about would convey the impression that a personally conducted party of Cook's tourists had gone before; but Uncle Billy was obstinacy itself, it being only necessary to suggest one way for him to take another. Fortunately one afternoon he got entirely lost, nor had he found himself on the following day, which compelled us to camp in a portion of the mountain utterly unknown to him, where we remained for two weeks with excellent sport, it was the best camp we ever made, being literally surrounded by wapiti. This was early in September; the velvet was just off their horns, while their bugling might be heard in all directions. The first evening after camping, having as yet had no fresh meat, Uncle Billie and myself started off in different directions in search of game. I soon heard him fire off six shots in rapid succession, but on my return to camp found he had been blazing into wapiti without causing any appreciable effect, indeed I only twice knew him to kill anything he fired at. Next day, accompanied by Uncle Billie, I climbed the side of the valley in which we were camped, immediately we reached the summit we heard wapiti bugling in two directions. This sound I have never been able to efface from my memory, it resembles from five to seven notes blown on a bugle, the old bulls being far less successful musicians than the cows and calves. On a fine clear morning I defy any music to be more stirring or enchanting to the ear of the hunter, nor indeed could a critic find fault with the harmony. Often and often in after life will some chance resemblance to this weird air

remind those who have hunted wapiti in September of the far distant mountains where such music abounds. The best though most unromantic imitation I ever heard was by a windmill on the Norfolk Broads. I could have sat for hours under that disordered old mill, listening to it bugling at every revolution, with my eyes closed dreaming of past happy days, the like of which I fear it will never be my luck to see again. We now turned our steps in the direction from whence the first challenge had issued, and after about half-an-hour's walk we reached the edge of a wood which appeared full of life, cows and calves on all sides but no bull to be seen anywhere. Uncle Billie's craving for meat, had become so intense at the sight that he became quite upset at my not firing, so after we had crawled and

wriggled into their very midst and no Bull being in sight, in order to prevent his shooting I did so myself, selecting a calf, of course all probability of a chance at the bull was now gone, so we strolled up to the dead calf, and while examining the locality where my bullet had struck, Uncle Billie cried "Look out, here comes the bull," and sure enough he came galloping straight for us, probably furious at the supposed intrusion of some Don Juan on his harem, he never slackened until within fifty yards, where he pulled up short, and I dropped him within a short distance. True enough it was within a short distance, but let me make a confession; so keen and excited was I over securing my first trophy that I shot him all over; I shot him in the antler, I shot him in the fetlock, I shot him more than once in the

body, and I also shot where he did not happen to be. Perhaps I am not the first who has lost his head under such trying circumstances, it was a truly magnificent sight to one who beheld so majestic a creature for the first time. He was the finest animal I killed during the expedition, carrying a magnificent head of seventeen points. We immediately set to work to skin the head, which, when detached, we stuck up in a tree. We then arranged what meat was required, returning to camp for horses, which were shortly despatched under Uncle Billie's supervision, leaving me anxiously awaiting the arrival of my first trophy, though the pleasure was eventually somewhat marred by its appearance, for the skinned head sawn in two did not convey a very accurate idea of the air of magnificent grandeur it had previously borne in my eyes. In America wapiti are erroneously called elk, and their flesh, though good, bears no comparison to that of the mule deer, also wrongly termed black-tail, which, together with elk proper, do not exist in the rocky mountains of Wyoming.

Next day, Uncle Billie having gorged, showed no signs of hunting, therefore, being only too glad to escape his company without hurting his feelings, I took my horse and set out alone, travelling in a slightly different direction from that of the previous day. After a few miles ride I heard the welcome music. Tethering my horse I proceeded on foot. While stealthily crawling towards where I expected to find the wapiti I was startled by a counter challenge on my right, and, glancing in the direction, beheld on a grassy ridge, about six-hundred yards distant, a fine bull proudly gazing towards me, evidently anxiously awaiting the anticipated encounter with him whom I sought, and whom I now perceived apparently in no humour for the fray, being engaged in a hearty roll in the dust under a pine tree. I instantly noticed that he carried a peculiarly mal-formed head and antler, which, as a curiosity, immediately enhanced his value in my eyes.

Determining to become possessor of this head, I took a steady aim and pulled, and pulled again, for a second barrel was needed. By the time I reached him he was dead, and I now gloated over the peculiarity of the left side of his head and antler, which reached down over the eye, terminating in a huge, ugly knob of bone, having but one prong, while the corresponding antler was properly formed, bearing five points. Such deformities are not uncommon among the deer tribe, and are the result of an injury during the early growth of the antler. Soon after commencing to skin this animal I was disturbed by another challenge about half-a-mile off in the same wood where I now was. So returning my knife to its sheath I immediately set off in the direction from whence the sound had proceeded, soon coming in sight of an old bull and two cows, but in such a position as to render any advance on my part, without being observed, impossible. I therefore

decided to remain lying where I was, and await the course they might decide on. Presently the cows, followed at about forty yards by the bull, walked leisurely in my direction, and passed me within fifteen yards. There I squatted fully exposed to their view. When opposite they suddenly stood and stared at me. I hardly breathed; they apparently thought I was some inanimate object, and passed on unconcernedly. Then came the bull, but he never saw me until I raised my rifle and it was then too late for him to seek safety in flight, I remarked that at this season, the bulls appeared to leave the task of keeping a look-out entirely to the cows and calves, seldom troubling to notice anything unusual among their surroundings, invariably allowing the cows to precede them, apparently quite satisfied that they were thus amply protected. Hardly had I shot the last wapiti, when a third challenge resounded from my left, higher up in the wood, and once more I went in pursuit, but this time it proved a long painful and unsuccessful stalk, I discovered him all right, but do what I would, I could never get a shot at him, there he was quietly walking in front of me, I on my hands and knees not daring to rise, could not quite keep up, but presently after having considerably increased the distance between us, he fell in with an opponent, when the two commenced to fight, now, thought I, is an opportunity to bag them both, but the ground was rather bare and I fancy I must have been perceived, for just as I proposed to try the effect of a shot, they suddenly turned their backs and trotted off, I followed them out of the wood and saw them in company with about twelve cows and calves, crossing a piece of prairie in the direction of another clump of timber. Somewhat disappointed, I was making the best of my way back to finish my skinning, when, ere I had gone two hundred yards, I came plump on an old gentleman with the widest and flattest antlers I have ever seen on a wapiti, one of which he was complacently rubbing up and down a tree, which stood directly between his line of sight and myself, and was undoubtedly the cause of his death, thus I had three fine specimens of heads waiting to be operated on, which operation, as it was getting late, I determined should be deferred until the morrow; accordingly I returned to my horse and set out for camp highly pleased with my success. I had also learnt that day, that each noble beast I had killed caused immediately afterwards, a pang I fain would have been rid of, a dying wapiti (perhaps few would have noticed it) gives with its expiring breath a long wailing sigh, sweet and soft, which I am not ashamed to own, has proved on more than one occasion beyond what I could stand unmoved, and I now, rather than risk a repetition of this, never spare my second barrel, for another such appeal might prove the last I could find it in my heart to bring about.

That night Uncle Billie showed his annoyance at my successful day by declaring it to be impossible to pack any more heads, and as he stated that I should find wapiti in the same abundance, right through the mountains, I agreed not to shoot any more at present. The next day was spent in skinning and bringing the heads to Camp, and on the following I went out with L., in order that she might obtain a head of her own shooting, we succeeded in getting within fifty yards of an old bull but the rifle she then used was unequal to the task, and the animal although wounded escaped. Next day we made another attempt, and after a long stalk on our hands and knees, failed to obtain a shot, but L. succeeded in losing her only hat, which when you have but one, is decidedly inconvenient. Having taken it off to avoid detection, and placed it in a fairly open spot, we were never able to regain possession

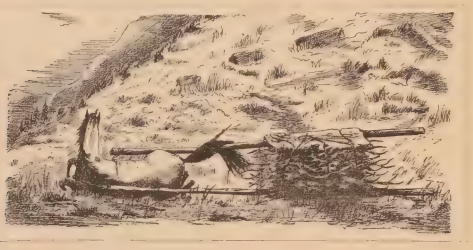
of it. It is wonderful the difficulty of finding anything you have once lost sight of under similar conditions, we thought we stood for certain within thirty yards of that hat, yet half-an-hour's search failed to reveal it, this reminds me that while on the prairie before entering the mountains, I lost all the remainder of the money I had with me under the following circumstances. I was hunting for prairie hens, or rather, more correctly speaking, sharp-tailed grouse, which, though inhabiting the prairies, are not the true prairie hen; having got into a pack of these, I knocked over seven, each of which I endeavoured to mark, by throwing down hat, handkerchief and every conspicuous article about me, including all my notes, which latter discovery I did not make until reaching camp, after successfully gathering my seven birds. To find the place again I knew to be impossible, we were therefore without money for the next three months, nor did we often require it. After giving up our search for the hat, and being close to the carcases of the wapiti I had killed a few days before, we went to have a look at them in case a bear should have paid a visit in that quarter, and sure enough so one had, having dined off portions of two of them. I therefore determined to come the following evening and wait for it; however, I found the time hang so heavily next day, with the prospect of an encounter with a bear before me, that I could not rest in camp, and started much too soon, arriving at the first carcase at about four o'clock, whereas there was little chance of the bear before five; I was ruminating in my mind which would be the most likely bait to watch, when suddenly the head of a bear appeared on the summit of a ridge thirty yards off, and an exceptionally fine grizzly he was, nor did my presence distract him in the least, he simply stopped a moment, stared at me, and then walked straight towards me, rolling his great head from side to side, apparently on excellent terms with himself, and perfectly indifferent to everything, except his proposed supper; up to the present I had been unable to get a good shot at him, he being head on to me, in which position a bullet would have spoilt that portion of him, but at length thinking fifteen yards quite close enough for safety, I fired at his shoulder, causing him to jump into the air howling, he turned seven somersaults in rapid succession, then walked slowly away inclining to the left, my second bullet (a hollow one) caught him in the flank, raking him the whole way up, finally stopping in the back of the neck, on receipt of this he gradually subsided, and after heaving a few rocks on him I deemed it safe to approach, he was still breathing, but otherwise unconscious. This afternoon's performance I afterwards had reason to consider a great piece of luck, particularly on account of the bear's size, for of the many grizzlies I have since seen from the Rockies, I have not come across one to compare with him, he now stands erect, having been most successfully set up by Rowland Ward, and measures over six feet from the ground to the top of the head; the fat which was three inches thick on his side, lasted us throughout the entire trip for cooking purposes, the meat we had no inclination to taste. Uncle Billie, when he saw the animal, proclaimed his utter ignorance by declaring it to be a cinnamon bear, I very much doubt his ever having been so close to one before. In a few days I discovered that two more bears came each night to another carcase, but though I waited for them regularly, we could never arrange a meeting, and at length most reluctantly I was forced to give them up, I now little doubt but that for my lack of experience I should have obtained both these and several others; any hunter, other than Uncle Billie, could have given me a few hints which would have prevented

my acting in such a manner as to make it a thousand to one chance against a bear approaching while I waited. For instance, I never heeded from which direction the bears came, in all probability hitching up my horse right across their trail, then again I most likely sat in a direct line to windward of them, and I believe no animal has a keener sense of smell. Many other obstructions did I place in the way of my success, such as can only be avoided by personal experience, or that imparted by another. I seldom had a carcase down for more than three days without a bear being attracted to it, nor can I ever remember one putting in an appearance before the third day, by which time the hot sun would have partially putrified the meat, in which state it appeared most appreciated, though it may have been that they failed to wind a freshly killed animal. Night after night, morning after morning, did I visit my baits, sometimes I would spend most of the night in a tree, half frozen, always with the same result, they had either been before me or else came after I left. I believe that waiting for bears, even under the most favorable circumstances, is a waste of time, better far is it to visit your bait just before dusk or at daybreak, the former I prefer. Sitting in a tree or elsewhere by moonlight, be it ever so clear a night, is a decided mistake, for even if your bear appears and you fire at it, the result of the best sight you can possibly obtain by the brightest moon, at fifty yards, is not calculated to do more than wound the object shot at, in which case you would have done better to risk finding it by daylight. After remaining in this camp a fortnight, and finding no mule deer bucks, we decided on a move. Sheep had evidently once existed in this locality, where I found the skull of one, but they were now no longer present. I had been unable to resist the temptation of shooting one more wapiti, and I have little doubt, had I wished it, I could have collected round that spot between twenty and thirty large heads, and fortunate it was that I obtained five, for I never got another sufficiently perfect to add to my collection.

CHAPTER IV.

IT became necessary to construct a carriole, such as I have described the Indians as using, on which to pack the trophies, my eccentric old horse being harnessed between the poles made a very good goer in that capacity, though seldom a day passed without the whole outfit upsetting, horse included, the sight of which rolling over, and over, down a hill, placed me in a continual dread of my heads being broken. Uncle Billie soon got back into his own trail, with the result, that game became very scarce, but nothing could induce him to lose himself again. One day we had a serious fall-out owing to his firing at game while in my company; after hitching up our horses, we had walked several miles on the look out for a buffalo, fresh signs of which were visible, suddenly Uncle Billie stopped, saying "Look," I looked for the Buffalo over the backs of some antelope close to us, but before I saw them he had fired, of course without effect except to scare everything away. I asked him what he meant by firing, and he grumbled something about not having meat, and my not seeing, finding that his excuse was hunger, I said no more, but

presently knocked over a solitary antelope, consoling myself with the idea that having meat he would now reserve his fire. In a piece of timber close by, we had previously seen some mule deer, we therefore arranged to walk to the bottom of this, and then up it from the end, while on the way down I lost sight of Uncle Billie amongst the timber, but when half-way through on my return, I heard him fire three shots in the exact spot where we had expected to find the deer, hurrying to the place, in a frame of mind which required little more provocation to tempt me to slip a bullet into him, I asked what he had shot at, he replied a "wapiti and mule deer," neither of which he had killed. A stormy five minutes ensued, when, after having somewhat relieved my feelings, he curtly informed me that if he did not suit, he was quite willing and ready to go off the mountains, to which I replied that I was not, but that it was the last time he should accompany me hunting, nor did I ever have reason to regret this decision, for he could distinguish nothing but imaginary game. One day, actually, in spite of every sign and whistle I dared make, he walked right into a band of wapiti, and I don't think he would have seen them among the trees



then, had they not almost run against him in trying to escape. I have known him mistake a badger for an antelope at fifty yards. Soon after this I started one morning at daybreak, intending to walk round the ridge of rocks at the side of which we were camped, I continued walking for hours, until I felt certain I must be nearly back at camp again, at length, failing to arrive, the disagreeable truth that I was lost began to dawn on me, but I journeyed on under the confident impression that our camp must be at the side of the rocky ridge which I had never lost sight of, I consulted my compass, but, only intending such a simple route, I had never taken my bearings at starting, and though it ultimately led me home, it was at that moment of but little service, however knowing that a friend of mine was camped not fifty miles off, I felt rejoiced when I came across his footprints in the snow, these I determined to follow, and doubtless his hunter could put me in the right way, though how he was to know the direction of a camp which he had never seen did not occur to me, I diligently followed the tracts for about two hours, when I came to a place where my friend had had an awkward slip, having narrowly escaped falling over a rock, I was at once struck by the remarkable similarity between his fall and one I had in the early morning, but

as I closely examined the details, the faint suspicion which had framed itself in my mind became gradually matured into positive certainty, namely, that my friend was none other than myself, and that for the last two hours, I had been following on my own trail of the early morning. I was now more hopelessly mixed and lost than ever, having not the slightest notion in which direction to turn, while to make matters worse, I should only have a few more hours of light. To retrace my steps, therefore, was out of the question. So I plodded on, still grasping a bunch of meat I carried with me for poisoning; in the event of having to remain out all night and perhaps the next, it would be necessary to retain this for food. But a fresh dilemma arose in my mind. One piece of meat I had poisoned; I was nearly sure which it was, but supposing I made a mistake. It would be very awkward, and I had no taste for dying all alone in knots. I again consulted my compass, and although it pointed in exactly the opposite direction to what I considered it should have done, I determined to give way to it, knowing that there was a cañon to the south, and that by following this in a westerly direction, I must eventually strike the valley in which we were camped, I set out towards the south, although doubtful whether, when I finally reached the cañon, I should ever recognise the valley, especially as night was now fast approaching. At length, seeing no signs of the cañon, I was on the point of giving it up and collecting wood for a fire ere it got quite dark, but thought I would climb just one more ridge, from whence, after wearily dragging myself to the top, I was delighted to recognise in the distance the rocks I had originally endeavoured to circumvent. I now knew the country, and made the best of my way back, arriving an hour or two after sunset, just as rifles and pistols were being let off, and Bill was in the act of climbing a hill on which to light a beacon. The cause of my mistake was very simple. On reaching the end of the ridge I proposed going round, instead of turning sharply to the right, I continued along a belt of fir-trees which connected it with another similar ridge running at an acute angle to the original, the narrow division between the two being hidden by the trees. Thus, when I imagined myself on the other side of the first ridge, I had in reality passed it and got on to the outside of the second, which I continued to walk round until striking my own trail. Had there been any sun I should, of course, have discovered my mistake earlier. It is almost inexplicable sometimes, how, in a short walk, one gets thoroughly turned round, on which occasion a compass is invaluable, if you can only reconcile yourself to the fact that there is no loadstone or other attractive mineral in the locality, and that the compass is therefore right and you are wrong, a fact on such occasions by no means easily impressed on the mind. As for Uncle Billie, his favourite scoff was, that if a man carried a compass it was no wonder he got lost, though I have found him in such a predicament on the slightest provocation, being obliged to bring him to camp, after he declared the task to be impossible, on account of its lying in the opposite direction. The rapidity with which one completes a circle when lost in timber is almost incomprehensible; though you would be prepared to lay a heavy wager that your course for the last ten minutes had been perfectly straight, yet, on examination, you will find yourself actually standing in your tracks. The circle is as often described to the left as the right, and the denser the timber the smaller the circle. About this period our stock of flour had shrunk alarmingly; so much so, that one night, principally owing to the wastefulness of our cook, we found ourselves with nothing to eat, except one small piece of bread

each, not so large as one's fist, and no meat in camp ; it was, therefore, decided, that on the morrow Uncle Billie, who knew of a house on the prairie, should proceed there and obtain what flour he could. He thought it impossible to return the same day, but on our impressing upon him that until he did so we should be starving, unless, during his absence, I should strike some game, he promised to make all possible haste.

Next morning no one had any breakfast. Uncle Billie started off on his mission, and I in search of game, taking with me Rube, who had borrowed Uncle Billie's rifle, though far better should we have fared had I left him behind, for the first deer was sighted by him, while, instead of pointing it out to me, he instantly fired at and missed it, which so exasperated me, that I told him to go his way, and I would go mine, all day long I wandered about, not a sign of game could I find, until finally I sought my horse, in order to return to camp ; but on reaching the spot where we had tethered our horses in the morning, what was my disgust to find them both gone, I fairly stamped about, was this a little joke on Rube's part ? if so, it was a very sorry one, but I could see no earthly motive in his removing my horse, and as no time was to be lost if I proposed to reach camp that night, I immediately set off. Nine miles of sharp walking brought me back soon after sunset, to find that Rube, by way of making himself useful and saving my legs, intending it possibly as a reparation for his folly in the morning, had taken my horse round to some point where he supposed he would meet me, but, at length, concluding that I was lost, he had set to work to fire off all Uncle Billie's cartridges ; for this I was grateful, though I had heard no report, and informed him in no measured language that a more supremely idiotic performance could not have been enacted by any ordinary fool. We had quite given up all hope of food for that day, and commenced to give vent to our feelings by abusing Uncle Billie, who, we knew by this time, would have had a good dinner himself ; however, at about ten o'clock that worthy appeared with a sack of flour, and we all went to bed satisfied. I can imagine I see an incredulous smile on the reader's lips, but I assure him that after a twenty-four hours' fast, a piece of hot bread was far more enjoyable to us than was to him the excellent dinner from which he has possibly just risen ; so much for the wild life, which can so minimise luxuries, as to cause those who have feasted off bread and coffee to say with contentment, we have dined heartily. Next day we moved camp, and not till some days after this, did we strike any game ; finally, I fell in with a mule deer when we fared sumptuously. Soon after that I very narrowly escaped the accidental charge of a wounded wapiti, at which I had made a very flukey shot, he was standing in a direct line between myself and the setting sun ; when I raised my rifle, I could not even see the animal, but having found nothing else throughout the day, I risked the shot, being certain that, under the circumstance, I must have missed, had I not observed something like an antler waving above the brush, I don't think I should have troubled further in the matter, but my curiosity being aroused by this movement, I walked to the spot, and there lay the wapiti, what they call in America creased, that is to say, the bullet had grazed the neck, so affecting the spinal cord as to momentarily paralyse everything below the wound, the animal being only able to raise his head, I stood looking at him for a few moments, unable to account for so partial a movement, when he suddenly regained his complete strength, dashing straight towards me, I only avoided his left antler by a few inches, and was fortunate enough to roll him over as he galloped

away; on examining the wound caused by the first bullet, I found it to be a mere scratch at the lower extremity of the back of the neck, beyond the penetration of the skin, which is very thick there, the bullet had scarcely wounded the flesh, and his head had been so damaged by fighting as to be worthless, this I found to be very frequently the case with wapiti heads towards the end of October. I attribute his charging me to have been purely accidental, as his evident intention was to escape, though I am informed that when wounded they will occasionally show fight.

CHAPTER V.

I WAS never fortunate enough to fall in with any mountain sheep, and believe them to be extremely scarce in the big Horn. Four times we came upon fresh signs of Buffalo, but only once saw any, and then as ill luck would have it, we were moving camp, when L., who was in front, called out to say she could see a Buffalo and Calf close by, but Uncle Billie was at that moment so engrossed in letting off a string of oaths at the top of his voice at a horse, which, with its pack had become jammed between two trees, that ere I could get near them, the Buffalo were scared away to take refuge in the dense timber, hundreds and hundreds I observed at

different times lying dead in every direction, in all stages of decomposition, some having been killed but a year before, many having evidently been destroyed out of mere wantonness. A very few years hence, and except for perhaps one far distant herd and a few stragglers, the Buffalo will be extinct; it seems almost incredible that in so short a time, such vast numbers could have been slaughtered, but it is by no means a timid animal, and is easily approached, except possibly in the now isolated condition in which it finds itself, where the wood is its only safety. I feel sure that the Wood Bison, as it is termed in America, is not a distinct variety as is generally supposed, but is simply the ordinary Buffalo, which, in its lonely and persecuted

condition, has sought the wooded lands as a source of protection, but I can lay claim to little experience on the subject. One afternoon on returning to camp, I observed what struck me, probably in my ignorance of such matters, as a peculiar phenomenon, it was just before sunset, on a piece of prairie, when I saw what resembled a white star fall straight in front of me, after falling about three parts of the distance towards the earth, it burst into red fragments, which remained perceptible for three seconds, apparently much nearer than is usually the case with falling stars, this occurred in broad daylight, and probably could be readily explained by an astronomer, but astronomy being among the many sciences upon which I am utterly ignorant, it appeared to me very unusual. On arriving in camp that evening, I found that L. who had been out on her own account, had successfully stalked and wounded, but failed to kill a wapiti. A day or two later, Uncle Billie returned from another foraging expedition into the prairie, with the sad news of the untimely death of a man with whom in former years I had been intimate, but latterly, our paths had led in different directions, until we again fell in with one another on the train from New York, both bent on the same errand, both having engaged the same hunter, and singularly enough, the same Buckboard for the same day; in each particular he had been more successful than I, who was accordingly delayed some days, and lost a good hunter, being supplied with the wretched substitute who now blurted out the melancholy news: "your friend has been and killed his self." "What, shot," I exclaimed, "no, fell over a cañon," and true enough it was as I afterwards heard from his hunter, Bob Stewart, one of the best of the profession in the district, who superintended the outfit, he informed me that the whole trip had been but a chapter of accidents, from the day when all his horses were stolen at the start, until the last fatal hunt. This melancholy event cast a gloom over our camp for many a day. When Bob Stewart fell in with us, he was on his way to collect two wapiti heads which had been killed shortly before the accident, and as he thought it probable that there would be bears about, I arranged to accompany him. Immediately on hearing my intention, Uncle Billie, who when asked to go shortly before, had complained of being tired, straightway forgot his fatigue and prepared to accompany us. It was late in the afternoon, and we had a long ride before us. However, Bob Stewart's pace was a very different one to what Uncle Billie had accustomed me to, causing my lame old horse to scramble and blunder along in the most uncomfortable manner. Shortly before reaching the spot where the wapiti were, we came in sight of three mule deer bucks, all with good heads, but for fear of disturbing a bear, should one be at the carcases, I refrained from shooting at them, though I afterwards wished I had not done so, for the bears had finished every atom of flesh off the wapiti, and all Bob Stewart could recover, were the bare antlers which we cut in two and packed. It was now quite dark, and much against Uncle Billie's wish, Bob Stewart persisted in taking a short cut back to camp. I have little doubt, but that his whole aim in so doing was to scare Uncle Billie, in which he undoubtedly succeeded, but it came hardest on me, who being so indifferently mounted, ran far greater risks than he. It was the worst ride I ever endured; until then, I never realized of what a horse was capable in the way of precipitous climbing, where his nose appeared of as much service as his legs. I was honestly thankful to reach camp, for such a ride in daylight was by no means what I should select—even as a short cut—while the darkness and utter want of knowledge

of the ground, made it decidedly alarming. An ordinary fall I had little objection to, but one on such an occasion meant death, as the Indians happily put it.

Bob Stewart and the remainder of his outfit left us next day, when we also moved camp. I had lately been searching for mountain sheep, but most unsuccessfully—a sun dried skull or two being the only indication of their past existence, though whilst thus engaged, I discovered that I had been hitherto wasting my time by hunting for mule deer in the timber and valleys, where I only found does and young bucks; whereas, when I took to the high ridges of rocks, there was no scarcity of old bucks with fine heads, a few of which I wished to take home with me. One day after a stiff climb over rocky ground, I came on the fresh signs of a buffalo, but while unsuccessfully searching for him, I disturbed seven mule deer all with grand heads; I judged as nearly as I could where they were likely to halt, and making a long detour, I proposed to surprise them from behind some rocks. In an hour's time, on creeping up and looking over the rocks they were nowhere in view, but I saw below me one with a large head, laying down facing me, but in such a position, that it became a matter of calculation how to direct a bullet fatally—without damaging his head or neck. The only spot where a successful shot could be placed was in the chest, this I essayed to do, but aimed too low. The deer immediately arose and galloped off, being apparently only damaged in the hind fetlock, which was broken. I gave him the second barrel on his way down the hill, I could see the bullet, as I then supposed, strike some hair off his back, but I afterwards found it had cut a chip out of the base of one antler, which I had mistaken for hair. The firing had disturbed the others, which now streamed out of the corner of some fallen timber hard by, I immediately set to work to examine the spot where the deer had lain. Being soon satisfied that he was more seriously wounded than in the foot, as shown by the free sprinkling of blood, capable of conveying this impression to a greater novice than myself, I instantly set off on his trail, clearly indicated by the blood. Had I been more experienced I should at any rate have allowed time for him to have laid down and stiffened a bit, which a deer after being seriously wounded, takes the earliest opportunity of doing, if undisturbed, and should you badly wound such game towards evening, and are not a great way from

camp, it is best to postpone following the trail till next day, when, if you do not find him dead, he will, at any rate, be very stiff and unwatchful, whereas, by immediately following, you will probably give yourself a long and possibly unfruitful chase, for even if he has time to lie down, his senses being keenly on the alert, render approach, as long as he has strength to run, nearly impossible. So I found it in the present instance, only the merest chance delivering him into my hands. I followed the fresh trail, freely indicated by blood, for an hour, during which time the blood had gradually lessened, until at length I was unable to distinguish his further course, and, with a heavy heart, bent my steps towards the spot where I had left my horse. After about three-quarters of an hour's walk along a valley I suddenly came upon fresh blood, with which the long grass was smeared. This, of course, was my deer; what luck! I followed the trail leading up the hill, where it was clearly perceptible, but it immediately vanished on gaining level ground, then I again found it on another incline, only to be once more lost on the flat. Nor could I succeed in finding it any more, for the country all around was flat, and the blood only flowed while climbing upwards. I was now on the point of giving up the chase for a second time, when it occurred to me that the deer appeared to have been making for a small strip of timber about a quarter of a mile distant, situated immediately under a precipitous ridge of rocks. This I determined to search. I, therefore, with the greatest caution, avoiding every stick or twig in my path, traversed the entire length of the wood, when, just as I reached the end, up he started, making for the open country, when I succeeded in lodging a bullet this time in the right position. I now examined the result of my former efforts, and discovered that the first bullet had struck the lower portion of the chest, cutting it open for six inches in length, and half-an-inch deep. The bullet had then passed through the hind fetlock, which had been doubled under the body. The second shot had simply chipped the base of the antler. I detached the head, which was a good one, and hung up some meat on a tree. I observed while thus occupied that this deer had been more fortunate on some former occasion, having saved his life at the expense of his tail, the absence of which had apparently been caused by a rifle bullet. Then, with the head on my shoulders, I started to find my horse, congratulating myself on an unusual stroke of luck. As it had now begun to snow heavily it was with difficulty I found my way. The horse I could not see at the distance of ten yards, so dense was the snow and fog. A similar atmospheric disorder is liable to take place at any time in these regions, giving the hunter but slight warning, thereby necessitating the utmost caution and careful observation of the localities through which he traverses. It is always well for him to tether his horse in some open and well-defined spot. Cold work I found it riding back to camp, with so unhandy an article to carry as a deer's head, but a hearty meal and a scorching fire quickly presented the day's hunt in nothing but the most glowing colours, and I slept that night thoroughly contented with my lot. Small lakes we occasionally met with abounding in trout, which were either on the verge of starvation, or, what is more probable, out of season. We caught them at each cast, and at length L. (having flicked every vestige of feather off her fly) discovered that this loss made not the slightest difference, for the fish rose and seized the bare hook on every opportunity I think the lakes we tried contained no large fish, three-quarters of a pound being the limit to their weight; but, though ill-conditioned, they made an agreeable change in our diet, and were thoroughly appreciated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next move we made was on to a piece of prairie land in the centre of the mountains, well stocked with antelopes, here I procured a couple of heads, one of which was a young buck, with horns no more than two inches long, having the prettiest little face I think I ever saw on an animal, but alas, the expression was entirely lost in the setting up. Antelope, like lynxes, are most inquisitive animals, their reckless curiosity may frequently be taken advantage of by the hunter, who can attract them to within shot by the judicious waving of a coloured handkerchief, or any peculiarly unusual and unalarming movement.

About a week later I sighted three buffaloes, which, after endless manœuvring on my part, in order to ensure a shot, proved to be nothing more important than three cows strayed from some ranche, the only other event of interest was the wounding, and eventual loss of a wapiti carrying by far the finest head I had come across, 'tis ever so, even when fishing, the monster, real or imaginary escapes us.

We remained on the mountains until about the middle of November, by which time the weather had become decidedly unsettled, and a threatening snowstorm indicated serious inconvenience should we delay our departure, therefore, with deep regret that the end was at hand, Uncle Billie was desired to lead the way into the valley. We had threaded the entire length of the Big Horn, and were within a day's ride of the valley. Not having a thermometer with me I can give no exact idea of the temperature, beyond that from first entering the mountains, occasional snow fell to the depth of five inches, except once or twice, when the storm lasted for two and three days, on which occasion the snow though deep, was quickly dispersed by the hot sun which followed. The water was invariably frozen in our tent during the night, the cold being at times severe; especially on one occasion when in the teeth of a strong wind we were all thoroughly exposed, and lost on a bleak ridge of rocks. The only inconvenience we found from the frost, was that of having our faces surrounded by a ridge of ice on the blankets at night. The scenery throughout was wildly picturesque and grand, with cañons of such formations as to render the crossing of them without a guide impossible, a detour of ten miles being frequently necessary to reach a particular trail. A party in our vicinity managed to arrive at the bottom of one of these cañons, but by no possible means did they find themselves able, either to return by the way they had entered, or escape on the other side, the upshot being that their hunter was forced to seek the aid of some one acquainted with the locality to extricate the outfit, which remained imprisoned many days. I carried a pocket aneroid, which, except for ascertaining the height of some of the mountains, I found of little service. I think, like myself, the queer places in which it frequently found itself, caused it to become what they term turned round. A day's ride of thirty-five miles landed us well into the valley, where little was to be observed except rugged upheavals of red clayey earth, traversed by huge cracks of considerable depth, and impassable except in certain places. Antelopes and coyotes appeared plentiful. The following day found us on our way to Mr. F.'s Home Ranche on Powder River. White-tailed deer in the low lands amongst the cotton trees, and along the banks of the river, were frequently met with, but all I saw were either does or fawns. We now and then caught a glimpse

of a cotton-tailed rabbit, and skulking coyote, being entertained throughout the day by watching the antics of innumerable prairie dogs, which are said to share their burrow in harmony with an owl and a rattlesnake, the former I have frequently seen perched at the entrance of the hole, but the harmonious presence of the latter, will remain open to serious doubt in my mind until I am fortunate enough to witness it for myself. I also think it probable that the owls I saw were the sole tenants of the holes over which they stood guard. We were much disappointed on reaching the Ranche to find Mr. F. had departed for England, after leaving such instructions as provided for us a most hospitable reception. Here Uncle Billie and the other two men were paid off, nor was I sorry to see the last of the incompetent old idiot, though I heard he was considerate enough to give me a good character at parting.

In two days time we left for Powder River Crossing, from whence the stage starts for the railway. While at the Ranch I made the acquaintance of jackass rabbits, most ridiculous looking animals, more hare than rabbit, with legs about two inches too long for them. On being scared they give one the impression of every limb being broken and flying in all directions about their bodies. On reaching Powder River Crossing, we found we should be obliged to wait a couple of days, all seats in the next stage being engaged. During this interval I had an opportunity of studying that odd mixture of good nature and recklessness called a Cow Boy, whose only object in life appeared to be to spend his well earned money on drink, into which he invariably puts a small spoonful of salt. While engaged in this occupation I think he is best avoided. I have seen a party of seven or eight dash up to a saloon yelling like wild Indians, throw themselves off their horses, enter the saloon, and commence to play dice for drinks, until not another drop could be induced to remain down their throats. On one occasion I joined in their game and was thankful when they were full, being compelled, in order to keep up with the play, to swallow nine glasses of beer when I only wanted one. Cow Boys are, I should say, composed of a collection of men from every position in life; some of them, fine, handsome, and evidently well bred, others, thorough looking scoundrels. I met there the son of an English nobleman, who had chosen the profession of a Cow Boy; he appeared to me but little over twenty, and I could not but admire him for his pluck and endurance in sticking to such a life of danger and hardship.

Powder River Crossing being anything but an interesting place wherein to spend over five minutes, we were much relieved when on the third day the stage was ready to convey us over a wearisome journey. This part of the proceedings is the only drawback to a hunting trip in the Big Horn, and I thoroughly dread it. This time we were crowded, being five in all, where there was bare accommodation for four, the fifth being obliged to settle himself on the baggage. The journey was even more trying than the former, being double the distance with the weather much colder, a considerable quantity of snow falling during the first day and night; however, with the exception of occasional stoppages for change of horses and refreshments, we retained our cramped positions until the second day, when we completed the two hundred miles in a covered conveyance but little superior in accommodation to a four-wheeled cab. The only variation in the monotony being at one spot where a little shooting had taken place, and where we were greeted on pulling up by a cheery voice shouting out, evidently with much satisfaction, "More shooting to-night."

A man lay on the floor of the saloon recently shot through the heart, they said it was all right. He was a notorious bully, and the successful sportsman had therefore given himself up and would be released as soon as possible. I asked what he would have done had it not been all right. They said "Oh, he would have moved off," in which case he would have been equally all right.

Throughout the last day nothing could be seen but a vast expanse of snow, with an occasional upright stick to indicate the road. A few days later and we should have been skimming along in a sleigh, but as usual when first required they were not in readiness, while the going had become so heavy, that every prospect of a breakdown was apparent, however, everything has an end, and finally we pulled up at Rock Creek in time to avoid being permanently crippled for life, and were able after a little to stretch ourselves almost straight again. It was late in the evening when we sought a bed at the hotel, being duly accommodated with a room constructed by three walls, the fourth (composing part of the side of a passage through the house) consisted of a movable curtain. I forget if there was a bed, but in such localities that article, if it does exist, is best avoided.

The following is a list of trophies, the result of our hunt; one grizzly bear, five mule deer (best head twenty points), six wapiti (best head seventeen points), two antelope, one badger, two red foxes, two cross foxes, one marten, one prairie dog. The following are to be obtained in the Big Horn, grizzly, black and cinnamon bears, wapiti, mule deer, (white tail deer in the valley), buffalo (rare), bighorn (rare), antelope, foxes (silver, red and cross), coyotes, badgers, marten, wolves, &c. When considering the result of these two months' hunting it must be borne in mind that I was comparatively a novice in the art, hindered considerably by relying on a perfect idiot for a hunter, under less disadvantageous circumstances, with like opportunities, doubtless bighorn and buffalo, with additional bears would have been added to the list. On leaving the mountains, being reduced to nil in respect to money, I was most agreeably surprised to find with what remarkable confidence utter strangers would cash my cheques, I can only imagine that living so far out of the world, they were ignorant of the extent to which dishonesty is practised therein, any way, their blind confidence and good nature enabled us to reach Cheyenne, where, through Mr. F., I obtained what further advance was required to provide for travelling expenses to New York, where in due time we found ourselves. It was wonderful, though not gourmands at heart, how such a life as we had been leading caused us to thoroughly appreciate a civilised dinner again, but not having at the time of writing this, immediately returned from a hunt, I must confess to being very much disappointed with American oysters. Having heard so much of their excellence and cheapness, I had promised myself an occasional feast, whereby I could appease the natural craving for such luxuries, without the disagreeable feeling that I was living above my income, though by the by, I never experienced much annoyance that way. Cheap they were and as large as could be desired, but quite tasteless, appearing as though their natural home was in fresh instead of salt water, it was usually with relief that I caused the last of half-a-dozen to disappear. I much prefer the inferior classes of British or French to the ordinary American oyster. Whilst on the subject it might be well to insert a word of warning against the liqueurs of America. I am under the impression that it is absolutely impossible to obtain the genuine article there, including champagnes, and possibly it is the same with other

wines, which, like their jams, may be manufactured from turnips variously flavoured for aught I know to the contrary. My experience has been obtained in the leading New York Hotels, where the only alcoholic drinks I sought were champagnes and liqueurs; the former I could not procure even moderately dry or good, the latter, though I tried many varieties, appeared composed of sweetened spirits of wine, flavoured according to label. At length, as a last resource, I enquired if they had any genuine imported benedictine; they replied, yes, they had. I ordered some; result—spirits of wine most successfully coloured and flavoured. I demanded to see the bottle, in that I knew I could not be mistaken, it was placed before me with dignity, being apparently a common Port wine bottle, with no attempted resemblance to the quaint shaped receptacle of the genuine article sealed with the well-known DOM. After this final effort, I stuck to beer, which is undoubtedly good, though if am to believe my informant as to the ingredients in its composition, a more unwholesome beverage scarcely exist, a large quantity of resin being employed in its composition. America is the only place where I have not at some period or other hit on a good American cheese; apparently, they export all that are fit to eat, retaining the refuse for home use; once when cheese was ordered during dinner, the waiter being anxious to know if we would take Cheshire, Cheddar, or Gloucester, as there were three of us we ordered some of each, they appeared, evidently all cut from the same piece of indifferent American. After this I used to ask for American cheese, but the waiter usually looked scandalized, being apparently unaware that such an article existed in the establishment.

Our first object after reaching an hotel, was to engage berths in the next Liverpool boat, for we found little pleasure in prowling about New York. I formerly thought a greasy Frenchman with an irritable throat a disgusting object, but he is nowhere when compared with an American, who makes a pastime of a filthy practice. When I used to see the boots of a large American hotel engaged some three or four times a day in sprinkling saw-dust over, and then sweeping the hall floor, it reminded me of a similar process enacted by the attendants in a Spanish bull-ring, only that in the latter case, the object was to staunch the blood of an animal, while in the former, the same office is performed on the expectoration of two-legged beasts. The behaviour of Americans in this respect, on occasions when their grand equality necessitates their undesirable presence being forced on one in a railway car, is positively too sickening and unendurable. I once saw a notice stuck up in a miserable little railway station in Virginia, worded as follows: "Gentlemen, please not to spit on the floor, and oblige your friends the ladies." It had evidently been read, and taken to heart by the only person present, who was complacently spitting into a basket of hens eggs as a substitute. We eventually found ourselves on the deck of the *Servia*, heading for Liverpool; the passage being quite uneventful, though the vessel did her utmost to make things lively for us, by indulging in a totally unwarrantable amount of rolling, finally landing us in Liverpool in about the usual time.

Home is always a welcome sound in one's ears, even though the greatest fascinations are left to return to it once more. In taking leave of America, we had also, we believed, said good-bye for ever to all sports such as we had lately enjoyed, yet, at the moment of landing, the prospect of reaching home once more surmounted every other desire in our minds, and a few nights later would have found us comfortably seated over the smoking-room fire, where "thrice we slew the slain."

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

'TIS an ill wind which blows good to no one, and under its influences in April, 1886, I once more found myself on the broad Atlantic. My object, as formerly, was sport, though the cause which necessitated another visit to America was the arrival of a climax which few have the luck to experience more than once in a lifetime. In short, my financial exchequer, the constitution of which had been seriously undermined years before, after gradually sinking, suffered a final relapse, with the result that my place was let for two years and I, preferring a life in the great North-West to a doleful existence in England, now found myself *en route* for Vancouver Island, where those who cared to might occasionally drop me a line which would eventually reach me with the customary esquire on the envelope transformed into trapper. There were now four of us, B., a friend, having volunteered to share our exile, and Fred, who had been my underkeeper for many years, I had decided should make one of the party on account of his keen desire for wild sport, and the confidence I thought I could place in him, combined with an earnest appeal on his own behalf to share our fortunes. To our fellow passengers we doubtless appeared as the customary tourists on a holiday trip, but what a vast difference to one's own feelings made the fact of absence from home being so to speak compulsory, the continual remembrance that for two years one is to be an exile, the very idea of being no longer my own master, cast a shade over the otherwise glorious opportunity for the wildest of hunting, for we had determined to penetrate where none but Indians had yet ventured. As I stood gazing across the sea the load which had so long weighed on my mind, seemed simply transferred to the heart. 'Twas only the feeling of home-sickness, which most schoolboys have experienced; it is with them of short duration, but in after years has a disagreeable tendency to cling. We should have sailed in a White Star boat, but at the last moment a flaw being discovered in her shaft, the *Bothnia* was removed from dock, where she had lain for the last year, and hurriedly equipped for the voyage, the result being much dirt and discomfort particularly in the steerage, where Fred had a rough time of it. Being much crowded, temporary bunks had been erected which, during a storm, gave way in the night, precipitating some sixty naked and partially dressed females on to the floor, such a yelling, and screaming, and praying to the Holy Virgin, except in the event of a veritable shipwreck, had seldom been heard. The food, Fred told me, was simply atrocious, the old hands, never having been so badly treated on any previous trip, were full of abuse, and one heard alarming threats of letters to the papers, which I conclude never found themselves in print. We had taken through tickets in

London, a grave mistake as we afterwards discovered, for on reaching New York, owing to a railway warfare we might but for this, have travelled the whole way to San Francisco for twenty dollars each, whereas we were obliged to stick to the Northern Pacific Railway. The Canadian Pacific was not quite completed at that period. On arriving in Victoria I was much struck by the civility of its officials, which bore a marked contrast to the officious impertinence of the Americans, and gave one a feeling of being once more amongst British subjects. We remained two days at the Driard Hotel, which is conducted somewhat on the American system, and is in all respects an excellent hotel. Fred having successfully disposed of two hats, one in the Atlantic, and the other in the Pacific, was told to purchase another with plenty of brim, to screen him from the hot summer sun, but what was our horror to find him later on proudly parading the streets of Victoria in a spacious article, which, worn as he wore it, would have successfully added the finishing touch to a fifth of November Guy. There was nothing particularly alarming in the hat itself if properly worn by an ordinary sized man, but Fred, apparently with a view of suiting his own peculiar style of beauty, had so contorted the brim as to render his appearance truly ridiculous, such was the object which presented himself to be admired in his newly purchased man's hat, though, as he stood between four and five feet high, nothing above his shoulders was visible to the grinning passers by save a large grotesquely twisted white felt wideawake, which proved such a tempting bait to an ever vigilant reporter, that he hastily plied his satirical pen with such promptitude that the small world of Victoria was early informed, by reading the papers on the morrow, that a novel description of Cow Boy had arrived, who was eagerly enquiring as to the whereabouts of wild Indians. No doubt this was highly gratifying to Fred, but scarcely the style of notoriety desired by us.

In Victoria we were introduced to Mr. Duncan, whom B. had previously met in England, and upon whom we relied for information as to the best hunting districts. He was then returning to his Principality at Metlakahtla, having been on a protracted visit to England. In a couple of days we all embarked on the *Boscowitz*, the most miserable, dirty little steamer imaginable. She is registered to accomplish the passage to Fort Simpson, a few miles beyond Metlakahtla, once a month; she starts at no regular date, and takes her own time, her average speed being five or six knots an hour. It was night when we went on board, and the first discovery we made in the morning was that the cabin swarmed with cockroaches, which are repulsive enough when occasionally found in the kitchen, but almost unendurable as bed-fellows, in fact, L. declined to sleep in the cabin again, preferring the saloon-table for the next few nights, until someone found her a hammock. At breakfast the food was so badly cooked and appeared so uninviting, that it was with difficulty we could induce one another to partake of anything, though on our three later trips things were much improved, while the captain exerted himself in every way to make us as comfortable as lay in his power under the circumstances, invariably treating us in the most courteous manner.

The voyage we found tedious and monotonous to a degree, chiefly owing to the slow pace and long delays. In two days we penetrated fairly into the rainy regions. I doubt if anyone who has not experienced it, can form a notion of the amount of rain that falls along the North Pacific Coast. The contrast within three days of Victoria, which we left in brilliant sunshine, being dismal in the extreme, each day now brought

its allowance of rain and mist. Our vessel was crowded; the saloon with prospectors and adventurers, one of the latter offered to accommodate us with untold luxuries, including one of his three schooners, together with a boat and hunters, all to be provided gratis out of his bountiful good nature, though we afterwards discovered that he actually possessed none of these three commodities which he so freely offered, all that he could in reality lay claim to being one or two schemes, which, with a little ready money, under his supervision might, according to his own account, easily be worked into a considerable fortune. I felt deeply obliged to this gentleman for all his generous offers, and especially for the subsequent uncalled-for interest he evidently took in my private pecuniary affairs. The remainder of the boat was filled with all sorts and conditions of men and women, including several Indians, one of whom was dead, having been bundled on board in the dark in a dying condition by her relations, in order that she might be buried in her village. After passing through the Straits of Georgia, and threading our course among innumerable little islands, which, but for the weather, would have conveyed a lasting impression of beauty, we emerged into the North Pacific Ocean, leaving Vancouver Island on our left. Here there is always a heavy swell even on the calmest day, and I should be sorry to experience a gale in such a position on the *Boscowitz*, whose back we were told was already broken, through too close an acquaintance with a sandbank; but such trifles are little heeded in this part of the world, and she will probably run so long as her two extremities remain connected, and when they don't, a considerable disaster will be the result. On leaving the North Pacific Ocean we wended our way through Millbank Sound, among crowds of islands. Not far from here is what they term a Rookery, consisting of a small island of bare rocks, upon which sea lions repose in hundreds, there during May and June they repair to breed, and are easily procured while basking, but an express rifle is very necessary, for if not killed dead they slide off the rocks into the sea and are lost. I much regretted having no opportunity of visiting this spot. Seals and sea lions were now frequently seen, usually asleep, with their hind flippers stuck up in the air, their noses apparently resting between them. Occasionally a sea otter was pointed out, but I am unable to verify this, and owing to the scarcity of the animal so far south, I rather doubt if I saw one. A humming bird would sometimes dart past us, so quickly as to be scarcely distinguishable from some large insect, and twice a sandpiper perched on board. Porpoises surrounded us in numbers, whilst occasionally a shoal of some sort of fish would pass, floundering about with their backs out of water, a crowd of gulls swooping amongst them. I conclude both were feeding on some, to me invisible object. Now and then a salmon would leap forth, and quantities of sedate bald-headed or (as I prefer to call them) white-headed eagles stood guard over their nests, built in the cedars along the shore. Great northern divers took fright and fled on our approach, or flew high over head, uttering their peculiar wild cry. Booby ducks allowed us to approach close to them, and many other sorts of wild fowl could be discerned, amongst which was noticeable a small sort of diver, which appeared unable to get fairly on the wing until it had bounced up and down on the water, like a piece of slate thrown flat side downwards, making ducks and drakes. I have noticed these birds strike the water from the height of four or more feet, several times within fifty yards before considering themselves safely poised for a decided flight, though possibly I may be mistaken in their object of thus bounding.

A more trying coast to navigate than that along which we had passed, and were yet to traverse would be difficult to find; while the man who can safely steer his vessel through all the intricate passages, some of which, at certain stages of the tide, owing to the fury of the currents are impassable, must be from long experience, intimately acquainted with every visible object, having the whole coast pictured in his mind, with far greater accuracy than could be depicted by any chart; of course during a fog, navigation is impossible. We shortly crept up the Granville Canal, so noted twenty-five years back, for the frequent and bloody murders committed by the Indians on every white man they found unprotected in the locality; even at this time I abandoned a proposed hunt a little farther south, Mr. Duncan assuring me that he thought we ran considerable risk by being such a small party; a warning, the importance of which was exemplified a year later, by the brutal murder of an entire party of whites.

CHAPTER II.

ON the seventh day after leaving Victoria, we landed at Metlakahtla, where Mr. Duncan was warmly welcomed home by his Indians. The whole town turned out. The band played, and very creditably too. Cannons were repeatedly fired, during which marvellous to relate, only one Indian blew himself up. Within half-an-hour all repaired to the church, a fine and imposing edifice, doing great credit to the architect, Mr. Duncan, and his workmen, the Indians. What the nature of the service was, being in Indian, we could not discern, but concluded it to have been a thanksgiving for safe return. Over Metlakahtla, Mr. Duncan reigned pre-eminent in conjunction with a council of the most prominent inhabitants of the thousand, who compose the population, all being reduced to the strictest state of order and utility by the indomitable pluck and labour of their ruler. It is not my intention to offer an opinion on the deadly feud existing between the Bishop's party and Mr. Duncan, for having heard but one side of the apparent persecution, such an opinion could only be worthless. Nevertheless, Mr. Duncan has my sincerest sympathy, and I am at a loss to conceive how any enlightened person entering his little house, consisting of but two rooms, fitted with the bare necessaries of life, whilst bearing in mind that his whole existence has been devoted entirely to the arduous task of converting wild savages into useful and

Silver Brooch representing ancient legend.

law abiding subjects, can accuse him of acting otherwise than in the interest of his people, denying himself even the most casual comforts. True, he has scandalised and excited the wrath of the Church Missionary Society, to which he formerly belonged, by, to my mind most justly and conscientiously, refusing to be ordained in order that he should wear vestments and administer the sacrament, for, as he truly states, such a proceeding would only place him in the light of a God in the dim intellects of the Indians, while the sacrament being at present incomprehensible to them, would but renew some superstition similar to those, which he has been so long in effectually destroying. No sooner had we become settled, than a devoted member of the Church Missionary Society, with a clerical friend, (who had been sent out during Mr. Duncan's absence, to investigate what they termed the disgraceful doings at Metlahahtla), came to the Indian house where we were, and poured forth their case against Mr. Duncan. It did not in the least interest, but exceedingly disgusted us, as we were busy packing, and they delayed us for two hours with their narrow-minded Christian ideas, finally adding the last straw by stating that it was utterly impossible to deal with an Indian to the advantage of mankind in general, without the early administration of the sacrament. What I should like to know is conveyed to an Indian's mind by eating small pieces of bread and drinking something he probably likes? Unless it be that he will look forward to his next feed. This may appear blasphemous, but show me the Indian who thoroughly comprehends the meaning of the administration of the sacrament; I doubt not that you will spend the remainder of your life in unsuccessfully seeking him. But Mr. Duncan holds a strong position, and I question if his worst enemies can reach him. His government is sound and he refrains from overdosing his Indians with the Christian religion, considering church once during the week and twice on Sunday sufficient, while by common sense views he rules those about him in such a manner as to ensure strict obedience to the law, at the same time rendering all who are good for anything capable of earning their own livelihood in an honest way. Those who visit Metlakahtla will marvel at the orderly manner in which the inhabitants conduct themselves; I doubt if any English village of equal size furnishes her constables with so little work as this model Indian town, which is unique in the cleanliness of its houses, every family having their own separate abode. I look upon Mr. Duncan as nothing short of a hero, who in former days forced himself fearlessly among the very savages by whom he is now peaceably surrounded, exposing himself to assassination at every turn, not even daring to man his canoe except with boys. For years his life might have been taken at any moment, as was that of nearly every white man who ventured on the coast unless adequately protected. Many are the harrowing details of attrocities committed by the Indians with whom he is now peacefully connected, the recitals of which have entertained me for hours together. One day while sitting in his little room, a rather more than usually repulsive looking Indian entered. "That man," said Mr. Duncan, "when I first came here was a cannibal, he used to rush about naked, proudly lifting his legs like a high stepping horse, being apparently afflicted with some description of madness, in this state he would bite chunks of flesh from women's arms, many are to be seen in Metlakahtla with a scar caused by the absence of the flesh so abstracted. It was supposed at such times that a great god of the mountains demanded flesh, on which occasions when anyone died, no matter of what disease, this man, accompanied by one or two others, would devour the corpse on the

beach while surrounded by the tribe. I have seen them," continued Mr. Duncan, "tear the bodies in pieces with their teeth, the flesh gradually disappearing, until nothing but the skeleton remained, I do not believe that they swallowed the flesh, though I was never able to observe by what mysterious process it disappeared."

Old Spoon Carved out of Goat's Horn.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING discussed the advisability of proceeding into Alaska, we concluded that the summer being so far advanced (it was then the 10th of May), we had best abandon the idea for the present at any rate, as the bears would be out of season in a month at latest, we therefore consulted Mr. Duncan as to the nearest spot for sport, and at his suggestion decided on a three weeks trip up the Skeena; thus the day succeeding our arrival in Metlakahtla found us on our way to that river, indeed we were in such haste as to leave Mr. Duncan insufficient time to pick a suitable crew for us, taking the first four Indians to hand, a proceeding I had ultimate cause to regret, being occasioned considerable trouble in consequence. As Mr. Duncan truly remarked on our return, "There are black sheep in every fold," but that, had we allowed him time, he would have found us a good and reliable set of Indians.

The usual pay for these Indians on a hunting trip was a dollar a day in cash and their food, the captain, as he is termed, receiving half a dollar a day extra for the canoe, but after my first experience I discovered that to provide an Indian with food was a mistake, it usually took him ten days to fill up, during which period he ate as much as three ordinary men, but at the expiration of about the tenth day he would feed more rationally. We amply provisioned our crew for three weeks with flour, rice, bacon, sugar, tea and baking powder, in sufficient quantities to have lasted a month, but at the end of a fortnight they had eaten nearly everything, and ran upon our private store for the remainder of the time. It was astonishing to observe the quantity they consumed without appearing satisfied, and I believe they could eat steadily for nine out of the twelve hours of the day; however, in future I always paid them a quarter of a dollar a day each in lieu of food, and then I had fears lest they would starve themselves, for should an Indian die in your employ it becomes a serious matter, in so much as you are expected to pay his full value to his family; when, therefore, I found that they simply provided themselves with a very limited supply of flour, tea, and rice, of which they ate scarcely sufficient to support life, a dead Indian or two on my hands appeared the probable result; but they are very tough, and would thrive, I fancy, where a white man would starve; however, on the

first game I killed they gorged themselves sufficiently to last a week. It was a five days' journey to the place where we intended making our permanent camp, the distance being not over fifty miles up the Skeena, but our progress was slow and tedious against the strong stream with no wind to aid us. On about the third night after camping, Fred, who had been on the prowl, called out to me, "Sir, here's a wild beast up a tree." Anticipating the capture of a bear at least, I seized my rifle and hurried to the spot. The night was dark, but after peering about I discovered a black object close to the trunk of a tree some fifteen yards up. Whether it was the head of a bear or not I was unable to make out; however, pointing my rifle as accurately as possible (for to see the muzzle in such a light was out of the question) I fired. Nothing fell, but something went further up; so I tried another shot, this time with better success, for the object came down with a thud. After striking a light, great was our disgust to discover a dead porcupine lying on the ground. On a future occasion I had a good opportunity for studying the peculiarities of one of these animals, which proved itself most entertaining. Our hunter one day caught one and brought it into camp alive. Immediately on being touched its tail, which was thick and long, and covered with spines or quills, flew up with considerable force towards any part of the body interfered with, leaving some six or seven quills firmly imbedded in the hand; and as each one was barbed in several places near the point much hard pulling and pain was necessarily occasioned in withdrawing them. This rapid movement of the tail, whilst being used as a weapon of defence, with the inevitable result of impaling the enemy, I conclude originated the general and erroneous impression, that a porcupine is in the habit of shooting its quills at the individual molesting it. Even upon the ground or on a log where one has been, these quills will occasionally be left behind, and fasten firmly in the legs or hands of the next passer by. I have heard of cases of their having worked out of sight in an Indian's body, occasioning serious after-results, the cause of the malady being unknown, the irritation only appearing at certain intervals. Dogs suffer considerably should they meddle with these animals, and how wolves escape I cannot say, for undoubtedly they feed to a considerable extent on them. The American porcupine is very different to that from which penholders are made, the latter being without tails, whilst the quills of the former average no more than two inches in length. They are considered good eating. We tried one, but were not much impressed with its excellence, though to do it justice I must confess that it was out of season at the time.

Humming birds were very plentiful about the mouth of the Skeena, darting hither and thither, now fizzing by so quickly, that but for the hum of their wings, they would have passed unperceived. The next moment darting from a bush, one would remain suspended in the air while feeding, I fancy on gnats, no movement being visible beyond the rapid vibration of its wings. It seems wonderful that this tropical bird can exist here at a season of the year when the cold is occasionally severe, though further up the river I

saw none, the temperature becoming much keener as we proceeded. On the fourth day we sighted the first goat, unknown in these parts by any other name than that of sheep, it was quickly agreed that B. should try his luck with him, and, after a short and successful stalk, he knocked over with a shot through the chest from below what proved to be a fine old he goat, with an unusually large and ugly face. I have remarked a noticeable variation in size and shape of goat faces, though the horns of two animals may be of equal sizes, and their bodies correspond in growth, both appearing of the same age, yet one may be the possessor of a smart little head and face, while the other owns that which would better become a donkey than a goat. On the following day we entered the mouth of a small tributary of the Skeena, about a mile up which we proposed to establish our camp, located there were a party of Indians, who showed serious objections to our proceeding. Strong language was passed between them and our crew, the upshot of which was, that we set them at defiance and proceeded up the river, but were compelled to keep a sharp look out on our canoe during the night, while our crew, apparently anticipating a conflict, appeared highly nervous, and borrowed three knives from us. Thanks to our utter ignorance of the language, we had not the remotest idea of what had been actually said by either party, though we had no doubt that our presence was most undesirable, finally we camped on the bank of the small river, amongst large cedar trees, surrounded by patches of snow, with which the country outside the timber was still covered as though in winter. Each day we used to paddle up the river in search of bears and goats; when one was seen, either B. or myself would stalk it. A bear on the side of the precipitous mountains, through which the river flows, appeared no larger than a black caterpillar, and little wonder if I wearied the Indian who first tried to point one out to me, for I endeavoured to discover in the locality indicated by him some object resembling a bear, whereas, had I sought an insect, I might have seen it sooner. On leaving the canoe we imagined that we could return, having obtained our prize, within the hour; but the first trial proved it to be a matter of some three hours heavy toil, with nothing to bring back. I am in ignorance whether my life has ever hung on a thread, but I do know that the snapping of a twig no larger than a pencil would have very frequently terminated it during this Skeena river hunting, where the footing was continually so insecure that one could not rely on the thin layer of earth or snow remaining under one's foot for more than four seconds, which kept the mind and eye pretty busy in selecting safe spots to cling to. After rain, unless there had been a frost during the night, should we suggest a hunt to an Indian, he looked towards the mountain simply replying, "Means death to man," and certainly the risk was considerable, for throughout the day we heard the constant roar of avalanches crashing down the steep sides of the mountains, sometimes resembling thunder, and at others, a party of skirmishers firing rapidly; on casting our eyes in the direction from which these sounds emanated, we usually observed a mighty torrent of snow and water dashing down over the rugged rocks, and perhaps when next out on seeking the broad strip of snow we had crossed but two days before, we would find it had slipped off in one mass, leaving a smooth surface of rock at such an incline as to cause a shudder, when we recalled to mind the ease with which we were enabled, by kicking holes with our toes, to traverse this spot, on which now not even a goat could remain. On leaving the Skeena, I determined that unless its mountains brought

forth something far superior to goats and bears, nothing should again induce me to balance myself over its precipices, for I am convinced that it would have been a matter of but a short period before the fatal slip or mis-calculation occurred which would have terminated the existence of one whose life, though dear to few, is exceedingly valuable to himself, and who considers this too good a world to be carelessly relinquished for a very doubtful future.

CHAPTER IV.

IN a few days we tired of this canoe work. The weather was bitterly cold and rainy, while sitting watching for bears which seldom appeared, was, under such circumstances, simple misery, so after killing a few goats we started off a day's journey up a creek close by. Here undoubtedly there were quantities of bears and goats. The latter we left alone, not wishing to make any needless disturbance. During one day I saw seven bears and many goats, and B. returned to camp, having seen five bears; but the difficulty of approaching without being either perceived or winded by them was considerable, and in this creek we only succeeded in killing two bears, though through sheer bad luck two more were lost, one of which had been regarded as dead. On the second day only two were seen, and the third day on which we returned to camp, owing to the smoke of our fire hanging in the gulley, no game at all was visible. While engaged in this class of hunting a fire should only be kindled when absolutely necessary for cooking, and even then it should be of the smallest dimensions if the bears are expected to be found in close proximity. Though the enforced absence of fire in such a climate is depressing in the extreme, for what with fording swollen creeks, and crawling over sodden snow, one passes the day from early morning in a soaking and semi-frozen condition. While I was stalking one of these bears a black wolf came skulking along, but immediately on winding the bear it turned and hurried off. In crossing the large creek, which was about twenty yards wide, by means of a tree felled for the purpose, I went very near getting an awkward ducking, for when just past the middle, where a swift eddy curled, in deep water, the tree having cracked in falling, suddenly parted, throwing an Indian (to whom I had confided my rifle for safety) and myself into the water. He was in front, and fell on his face where it was comparatively shallow, and, being instantly on his legs again, just succeeded in grabbing me at the moment, when, owing to the strong current, I had lost my balance, and should have been swept head-over-heels into the eddy. As it was I only got wet up to the waist, though quite disagreeable enough on a cold day. The only thing which made a decided impression on my mind at that moment was hearing my rifle grating on the rocks at the bottom of the river; but on examination it showed no signs of injury beyond a soaking, which had become its normal condition of late. We found the country about the Skeena almost impassable, the low ground being covered with willows beaten down by the snow, and closely interwoven. If in half an hour you succeed in working a passage through four hundred yards of this, as often as not on your hands and knees, on emerging you are attacked

on all sides by a most offensive plant called the devil's club of about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and the most persistently obnoxious and pain-inflicting growth I have as yet come across. It flourishes in every conceivable position: sometimes along the ground, where it throws you down, causing you, in trying to save yourself, to clutch at its next branch, which will be in an upright position, and covered with the sharpest of prickles three-quarters of an inch long. Each one you encounter penetrates your flesh, and either breaks off or leaves its natural position to remain with you until, at your leisure, you extract it. They grow about six feet high, sometimes more. If you step on the lower end of one it springs at your nose instantaneously converting that member into a pin-cushion, whilst, as though not content with having struck you once, being very supple, it continues to bob against your face, leaving its prickles behind at every contact until you succeed in placing your foot upon the stump, or otherwise avoid so pugilistic an obstacle. It seemed to me that I never sat down on, or seized any other object, either to help me along or to steady a tottering balance, they grow almost everywhere, except up on the mountains, bearing in the latter part of the summer a cluster of red berries and handsome leaves; the only possible use of this plant, so far as I could ascertain is to enable one to return to camp with the few fluttering remnants of clothing, which a day's hunt in such a country leaves on your person, firmly impaled by their agency to your flesh. Supposing you have overcome these obstacles, and desire to reach higher ground, you will find yourself climbing over rocks, scrambling up fallen trees, or creeping under them, then suddenly disappearing up to your arms through a patch of snow, of which the crust has given way, and if you persevere against such obstructions, for say three hours, you may have proceeded a couple of miles from camp, in which case avoid trying a short cut back, or you will, in all probability, find matters still more complicated.

The contemplation of ever getting about in such a country frequently made me long for the comparatively easy slopes of the Rockies, where I could comfortably ramble 30 miles a day, but all this is a matter of individual taste, and if any one desires to vary the monotony of life by making a porcupine of himself with the voluntary assistance of the devil's club, or flipping his face with stout willows, poking broken sticks in his eyes, and slipping off trees, through snowdrifts, or over precipices, by all means let him try a hunting trip up the Skeena, where, after stemming the strong stream for about fifty miles, let him take the first tributary on the left, then camp a mile further on, and follow on foot the course of the first creek on the right for four or five miles, and I will undertake to say he will meet all these variations to the customary country stroll, and also that he will not be disappointed in finding many bears and goats in the locality. All the bears we saw here were black, though an occasional brown one is sometimes shot, grizzlies appeared scarce, but the Indians usually give them a wide berth. The black bears in the spring are generally to be seen on the sides of the mountains, grubbing in the ground, feeding to a great extent on the roots of the skunk cabbage, an exceedingly handsome plant, with a large and peculiar shaped yellow bloom and enormous leaf, the whole possessing a

most offensive scent scarcely distinguishable from a mild application of the skunk. Having been camped for twelve days, on ten of which it rained, once for three days on end, indeed the rain in these parts is sufficient in itself to place a serious barrier in the way of sport, and after having thoroughly hunted everything, including the Indians out of the locality, we struck camp, steering for the coast, where our crew informed us we could do much better. On the evening of the second day we reached the mouth of the Skeena, and on searching for a convenient spot for camping, a by no means easy thing to find, we came plump on a bear. As on these occasions I always placed my rifle in readiness for such an emergency, I was out as soon as the canoe touched land, and knocked master bruin upside down, but in a few moments he was rapidly scaling a bank; a second barrel lodged a bullet in his back, and once more he rolled over, falling out of sight in a hollow, from whence, on my reaching the spot, he had entirely disappeared; the whole crew armed with a double-barrelled pistol, which I had foolishly left about, for we allowed none of the Indians to carry guns, and Fred with his revolver, now set to work to hunt the dense mass of fallen timber, and shortly, amidst yelling and shouting, the popping of Fred's revolver proclaimed the discovery of the animal, hastily scrambling on to the high trunk of a partially fallen tree in order to obtain a better view, I was horrified to find that the bear was between myself and the now rapidly discharging pistols (which I knew, from personal experience, were calculated to hit everything except the object aimed at), and thankful I felt when the stock of ammunition failed, for I considered the bear stood a far better chance in our relative positions, than I did, reluctantly on account of the extra hole I should be compelled to make in his skin, I gave him his *coup de grace*. Fred afterwards informed me that at one time the bear turned on him, causing an Indian near to shin up a tree, I was not surprised at this hostile action even on the part of so mean an animal as a black bear, when provoked by Fred dancing on his tail, and teasing him with a revolver; while this exciting chase was taking place, another bear occasionally showed itself about one-hundred yards away, on an almost perpendicular ledge of rock, but so far as I am aware it still remains at large, this occurred on the 27th of May, and evidently the bears were losing their coats, the one just killed being almost worthless, with scarcely any under fur remaining. Three days later we returned to Metlakahtla, being obliged to seek a fresh crew, and with as little loss of time as possible, we made a fresh start for some mountains in the Granville Canal, where the goats were numerous. B. having here secured a young one on Pitt Island, returned to Port Essington, in the hopes of rearing it by placing it under the care of an old tame goat; doubtless, this would have proved successful, had we not been short of condensed milk, the want of which so weakened the kid that shortly after being placed with its foster mother it died. Up to date, the 10th of June, we had killed twelve goats and three bears. L. and I remained a few days longer in the hopes of securing a young goat, but though I killed two does with kids, we were unable to capture either of them. The mountains here were far easier to get about on than those we had previously encountered, yet these little wretches immediately on finding themselves chased, though only about a fortnight old, took to the most precipitous spots where neither the Indian or I dared to follow, and with sorrow on each occasion, I was compelled to leave them to their fate, probably to fall an easy prey to either wolf or eagle,

plenty of which prowled or circled around, during these few days I came across the frequent fresh tracts of bears, but saw none.

Our next camp was in the exceedingly pretty inlet of Klewnugget, off the Grenville Canal; marvellous to relate, for a period of three days we enjoyed fine sunny weather, surrounded by humming birds, constantly hovering within arms length, while peering into every quaint looking flower, all about were fresh bear tracks, some of unusually large size. I felt much consoled that at this season their thin coats were useless, for having injured myself a few days previously in the mountains, I was forced to remain on my back, thoroughly enjoying the surroundings. But for the heartless conduct of one or two pairs of ravens, nothing could have exceeded the tranquility of this secluded nook. A small colony of jackdaws inhabited some trees close by, and were no doubt congratulating themselves on the result of the hatching season, and the healthy appearance of their families, which though unable to leave the nests, were most promising young birds, but ere long cheerful chatterings turned to cries of distress, on looking up I beheld a raven busily engaged in extracting the pride of a certain family from its home, in which it eventually succeeded, immediately flying off to the mountain peaks with the miserable little fledgling in its beak, its long legs dangling helplessly in the air, and followed for some distance by the now frantic colony. I felt heartily sorry for the poor daws, who were henceforth visited by this or another robber each hour, which in spite of every device on the part of the parents to divert its attention, invariably retreated only after securing its living prey. Had I not known that the ravens were catering for their own families, I should have befriended the now terrified jackdaws, whose offsprings were becoming seriously reduced in numbers. At the expiration of three days I don't believe a single young one remained, the piteous cries of the old birds having scarcely ceased before being again called forth by another affliction. During the timid assaults of the parents on the ravens, apparently in order to attract their attention, they frequently turned on their backs, making a dive of some considerable distance in this position. The only other birds I ever observed behaving in a similarly erratic manner were English snipe, which occasionally turn over on their backs, shooting through the air at a slightly downward incline for perhaps twenty yards, their white breasts flashing in the sun.

These American jackdaws occasionally build among the sticks comprising the foundations of the eagle nests, though for the most part their nests were built in the ordinary manner.

CHAPTER V.

THE *Boscowitz* now passed northwards, and as we proposed to return in her for some fishing, we made the best of our way back to Metlakahtla. I had killed five more goats, but the season was too far advanced, the long wool hanging in bunches about their faces and necks; there was therefore nothing for it but to return the rifle to its case, there to remain in peace for the next four months, while we took to fishing in the meantime. During this trip we had tried as food, first an old he goat, which tasted strong and nasty; afterwards a cub bear, which did not seem to taste at all; of course at this season the animals were out of condition and in their poorest state, not a particle of fat being anywhere visible. Before closing the account of our first trip, a few remarks on the nature of the objects of our search may not be inopportune.

First, the ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT: Never did anything in the natural history line astonish me more, than to find in abundance these animals, which from all accounts I had ever received, I concluded to be about the rarest creatures in America. Nor do I understand how it is that English sportsmen have not made the discovery, that at almost any point along the North Pacific coast (north of Victoria) to Fort Simpson, and I believe far beyond, there can be obtained with but slight exertion, as many goats in a fortnight, as would satisfy the cravings of the keenest hunter. A few years ago, a friend told me with satisfaction, that he secured from a spot in the Rockies, known to himself alone, seven goats at a cost of over £1,000; had he but journeyed to Victoria, he could have slaughtered 100 with an outlay of £10. But the goat is by no means a sporting animal. After I discovered the ease with which it allowed itself to be approached I paid little heed as to the direction of the wind, simply relying on keeping out of sight when within 300 yards, and in no single case have I ever scared a goat while stalking it. I have never seen them take any of the marvellous leaps usually recorded of them, but have frequently noticed that should they miss their footing when jumping to another rock, it caused no alarm, for turning on their sides they will slide down quite gently, sitting nearly upright on the outside of the haunch. Their feet are spongy underneath, surrounded by a soft ridge of horn, well calculated to render slipping almost impossible. When galloping they present an exceedingly stiff appearance, much resembling the plasters depicting Roman horses of ancient times, with not half the grace of a nursery rocking horse. They are tenacious of life, and when shot in a fatal spot, seldom fail to utilise the few remaining moments of life left them, to crawl to the edge of the nearest precipice, over which should one be at hand, they endeavour to throw themselves. I had several of my heads totally ruined by this vicious habit.

The females have thinner horns than the males, from which they also differ by being bent sharply backwards at about two inches from the point. They bring forth their young towards the end of May, though there are said to be usually two, I have never seen more than one in company with the mother, they are exceedingly delicate and difficult to rear by hand, though doubtless with a tame goat on the spot they could be easily brought up. Towards the end of the summer, quantities may be shot

in one locality where they congregate at a "lick." I have hunted in a place where I was told an Indian had killed 30 without moving from the spot—of course remaining hidden all the while; I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this statement, though, I have little doubt, that at such a time, large numbers could be slaughtered; but their wool is then short and they have little or no hair. The Indians kill them simply for food.

On Bears.—I have every reason to believe that the cause of bears in some districts so far exceeding in size similar species from other parts of the same country is greatly due to climate and facilities of obtaining food, thus the huge bears of California probably never hybernate at all, feeding steadily the whole year through, whilst the comparatively diminutive ones of the north-west can only really rely upon satisfying their appetites for three or four months in the year, actually spending five to seven months in a torpid state, without any food whatever. They enter their winter quarters in some suitable nook or hollow, simply rolling in fat, and leave them mere skeletons, the she bears in the meantime, having brought forth a couple of cubs each, though this number is occasionally reduced to one, or increased to four. I may be in error when stating that they leave their caches mere skeletons, for not having actually secured a specimen immediately from the cache, I am ignorant of their state at the time of their very first appearance, but all the early bears I have seen or shot were as I state, though I have read several authorities who declare the bear leaves its cache in the spring fatter than when it entered in the autumn. Their principal food is in the spring roots, especially that of the skunk cabbage and the early shoots of what seemed a sort of hemlock; in the summer insects, beetles, and any fruit that may be obtainable, putrid or fresh flesh never seems to come amiss; and in the autumn, they do themselves handsomely on salmon and berries, of course they feed according to the produce of the district they inhabit. I have some reason to believe, though the true cause I have as yet been unable to ascertain for certain, that strychnine, when administered in the usual manner, appears in no way to affect them. Grizzlies are easily distinguishable from the black or brown bear by the long slightly curved claws of the fore feet, indeed the claws on fore and hind feet are so formed as to render them incapable of climbing an upright tree. There are four species of bears inhabiting North America, exclusive of the brown bear, which I am inclined to think distinct, but which is commonly considered as a variety of the black bear.

Commencing in the extreme north and journeying south we come to the polar bear, then the barren ground bear, a savage animal, very similar to the grizzly, inhabiting the barren lands of Alaska, and across to the east coast, but never venturing further south; next we strike the grizzly, brown and black bears. Grizzlies are to be found of various shades, from black, beautifully tipped with grey, usually called silver tips, to a dull dirty greenish drab. The brown or cinnamon bears are of various brown shades. And the black only vary in respect to a white horseshoe which is more or less distinct on some varieties.

Bears have remarkably keen noses, their eyesight I think little of, but I very much doubt the possibility of ever approaching one down wind; too much attention cannot be devoted to the probable direction of the various currents of air, while hunting them.

It is not my intention to dwell at any length on the subject of scenery, so much has already been written, and by such able pens, that I feel sure no words of mine

would be considered to do justice to so extensive and varying a topic. I therefore ask the reader to close his eyes and spend five minutes in picturing in his mind a vast expanse of rugged rocks, precipitous mountains, surging torrents, placid lakes, giant trees, deafening waterfalls, and seething cañons all more or less of volcanic origin, and of the grandest and wildest conception, of all shapes and sizes, jumble and mix them up in wild confusion, and by so doing he will probably present for himself a far more realistic picture of British Columbia than would be in my power to describe, there appearing to me a singular sameness about American scenery, the monotony of which is only successfully varied by the presence of some wild animal. Out of the twelve days we had been hunting, only two were free from rain, and it was almost with satisfaction that on the 18th June we found ourselves once again on board the *Boscowitz* bound for sunnier climes. Here we discovered B., whose goat had died, and who proposed to spend the next nine weeks on a visit to the interior, in company with a clergyman, arranging to join us again in August for the winter hunt, but from this date I must ask the reader to bid adieu to friend B., who we never saw again, and from certain unchristian transactions and evil deeds, committed by the men of God, who appeared to flourish on this coast, being outnumbered only by the goats, I trembled for B's safety, lest he should have fallen among a gang of them ; it sometimes made my blood boil to find hypocrites aping Christianity, and abusing their strength by illegal acts of oppression committed under the shielding cloak of the church.

CHAPTER VI.

ON starting in the *Boscowitz*, we had no definite idea as to where we would land, our primary object being, to get out of the rain, and secure good fishing ; after obtaining all the information forthcoming from those on board likely to know anything about such matters, we finally decided to go to Burrard's Inlet, to reach which place it would be necessary to leave the *Boscowitz* at Nanaimo. There were two missionaries on board, and on Sunday, of course, each considered it incumbent upon him to hold service, and deliver his sermon.

The first obtained a good audience, but on the second attempt, there was a marked falling off. Missionary No. 2, had been busily collecting subscriptions for his Church during the voyage, and indeed, he had a goodly number of names on his list, the total amounts against them being constantly added up by him, showed a considerable sum ; but unfortunately, they were merely promises, and I fear for the collector's sake, that when next he takes his rounds, dropping the proceeds into his melancholy-looking bag, these donations will be conspicuous by their absence—churches forsooth—the amount of money from England and elsewhere, recklessly squandered in building churches for the Indians, and comfortable houses for the adminstrators of the Gospel, which from time to time are abandoned and left to ruin, would keep many English families from starvation and death ; cannot an Indian be as effectually preached to in an ordinary log hut, as in an expensively fitted church ; is it just to send money so terribly needed among our own poor, to be squandered in fruitless attempts to convert a stray

Indian or so, whose soul is as safe in its former condition as it is after a missionary has been jabbering unintelligible jargon at him? I found the Indian, whose path the missionary had never crossed, a far more honest and less deceitful being than he who by such contact had added the cunning of the white to the dirt and filth of the Indian; it appeared to me, that the partial development of an Indian's mind renders him at once an object of distrust and danger.

But little worthy of record took place during the trip, on several occasions whilst inspecting whales at no great distance, we noticed that instead of squirting up water, as is generally understood, they in reality, simply emit a column of vapour, or breath, resembling steam, which is blown upwards by the whale on reaching the surface. I had purchased at Metlakahtla a small dug-out canoe capable of carrying three persons, thinking it would render us more independent on our fishing excursions, we ultimately found it of almost daily service, these dug-outs are scooped out of a solid block of cedar or cotton wood, some of them of such dimensions as to carry three tons with safety, they are decidedly heavy and require endless attention; on sunny days they have to be covered with an awning, and even then, unless continually sprinkled inside with water, those made of Cedar are liable to split, I have rarely seen a perfect Cedar canoe, there being nearly always a crack or two which has to be caulked. Some unsuccessful prospectors on board, kindly offered to convey our baggage to Burrard's inlet whence they were returning in their canoe, therefore, on reaching Nanaimo we bid farewell to the *Boscowitz*, pitching our camp about a mile from the town. During the night, hearing some Indian dogs busy among the provisions, I dispersed them with boots thrown from the tent door, but in the morning, we found they had stolen a plate, fork, and tin pot cover, all of which articles were ultimately discovered about one hundred yards off. The owner of the canoe which was to take our things, not being ready, we remained another day, making a start on that following, L. in the large canoe, Fred and I in our little one. The distance direct from Naniamo was between forty and fifty miles, but we were obliged to make one camp on the main land, there we saw several blacktail deer which seemed plentiful right along the coast of British Columbia to Burrard's inlet, where, after shooting through the narrows, a most alarming proceeding except at slack water, or until you are accustomed to the peculiar formation of the currents, we discovered ourselves in a large inlet; selecting a nice looking spot about two miles further on to the left and nearly opposite the town of Vancouver, or rather the remains of it, for a fire a few days previously had destroyed every house, we thanked our friends for their kind assistance and set to work to establish a permanent camp. The spot we had chosen appeared the only suitable one within miles, a convenient little creek ran from the sea inland, up this we could bring our canoe to within a few yards of the tent, while immediately, behind, were huge cedar trees, with plenty of small wood for burning, and in front a large tract of coarse grass, extending for half a mile towards the sea. Burrard's inlet has one great peculiarity which seems to have baffled every attempt to construct a time table to correctly notify the time when high or low water may be relied upon; though this applies equally to all waters between Vancouver island and the main land, yet I conclude the difficulty here is intensified from the fact of such an enormous body of water having to pass through so exceedingly narrow a passage, from the Straits of Georgia. Provided there was no contrary wind, we could generally rely on a strong current in our

favour either up or down the inlet, for as the water rushes in, up the middle, it forces that already present in a contrary direction on either side, and when running out in the centre, it follows an opposite direction at the sides. I have only seen one steamer in the inlet capable of resisting the full force of the tide in the narrows, and she could but crawl against it. The first noticeable objects on entering these narrows, were a few Indian huts, and a large canoe propped up on the shore, wherein an Indian was buried, he had been capsized while crossing to the other side, where there were several more Indian graves, with erections over them resembling miniature greenhouses. Burrard's inlet is by no means a place I should recommend for fishing, a large variety of fish can be obtained there, but I afterwards heard of a far better locality, where fine sport is certain, and at this spot, some time bordering on the month of July, or later, I should recommend the fisherman to try his luck. At Cowichan, about two days from Victoria, in the river and lake, he will find sufficient trout and salmon to fully occupy his time. Altogether we spent a very merry three months in Burrard's inlet, though we found no fish prepared to deliver themselves up in sufficient numbers to constitute a large bag, except whiting, which necessitates but little skill to secure, these and ling, or black cod, as they are called there, were the only two species we ever found any difficulty in disposing of; each day was spent in our canoe, or on the banks of one of the two small rivers flowing into the inlet, which contained sea trout and salmon, the latter, being high up and blocked in, declined all bait. At low water we could walk out on the mud, and pick up a dozen crabs, about eight inches across, in as many minutes. Whilst digging for worms there, I frequently turned up from about the depth of a foot, a peculiar pink creature, resembling a cray fish, only that one claw was nearly as large as the whole fish, the shell was transparent and soft; I never found one more than five inches long, nor did they seem calculated to exist, except in the mud from which I extracted them; huge cockles and clams swarmed; octopi, I was informed were plentiful, but I did not want them; though the Indians procure them for food; great flat fish about a foot-and-a-half long, we sometimes speared; dabs and lemon soles we tried to catch with bait, but failed. I once found a nearly dead skate, heavier than I could lift; sometimes we caught a handsome dark viviparous fish, locally known as perch, much the shape and size of a roach, with brilliant blue stripes; if a female, while extracting the hook, she would drop in some instances, as many as twenty-four young ones, the colour of gold fish, and a little over an inch in length, these as they fell in the sea, would swim merrily away. We used to catch the sea trout with either fly, meat, spoon, or a piece of themselves; the only fish which annoyed us were bullheads, these gluttons seized on every possible occasion, any description of bait, real or artificial, our only consolation being, that the Ospreys waged unceasing war against them; these birds were very plentiful in Burrard's inlet, hawking over the water throughout the day, and suddenly dashing down with a souse, which could be heard half a mile off, they disappeared entirely under the water for some seconds, ultimately rising with a fish of perhaps two pounds weight in their talons, with this after a few preliminary shakes in the air, in order to throw the water from their feathers, they made straight for their nests; I have seen one struggling for fully two minutes in the sea with a large fish, before being able to rise with it; the only occasion on which I beheld a white headed eagle in the inlet, was once when my attention was attracted by the terrified cries of an Osprey, which it was chasing, the Osprey appeared greatly alarmed, and finally dropped

the fish it carried, which the eagle seized before it had fallen five yards through the air. Dog fish we unintentionally caught in numbers, they abound in the inlet, being largely used in the manufacture of oil, a quantity of which is, I am informed, sold as cod liver oil; on finding themselves at the bottom of the canoe, they would sometimes become sea sick, and at others, present us with about eight young ones, or if not so far advanced, with what resembled a mass of poached eggs. Ling, rock cod, and tommy cod, particularly the former afforded good sport; we used to drift about the narrows, between tides, with a huge line the largest size conger hooks, and a full-grown flat fish or whiting for bait; it is necessary to fish among the rocks at the bottom for Ling. I first commenced with a salmon line and light tackle, of which I lost a large quantity, presently, having lowered the enormous bait among the rocks, you feel a dead tug, if it is not a rock, it is a Ling. A severe strike, and the rapid hauling in of six yards of line solves the doubt, if it be the fish, he comes so far peacefully, but another yard or two taken in will cause him to tear and pull till, do what you will, he will fetch back a few feet of line, at length you get him to the surface, where, if he does not shake the hook out of his boney mouth, he will assuredly commence to wet you through with his struggles. It is no easy matter to gaff such a fish in a crank canoe, but your companion, after nearly upsetting the frail craft, will finally land a 28 lb. Ling between your legs, placing you in imminent peril of a stray hook being somewhere embedded in your flesh. As the tide remains but a short time in a fit condition for this class of fishing, you never get many, three in the boat, and two lost was the best day I had. I always put a yard of salmon line on to the hooks, by which means I found the fish more willing to seize my bait than that of the Indians on coarse lines. The Indians have a very quaint contrivance for spearing Ling, consisting of an extremely long and slender spear, which is used in about thirty or forty feet of water; attached to the point of the spear is an exact resemblance to a large shuttle-cock, only that, instead of feathers, thin pieces of wood are inserted, of about a foot in length, this is pushed down in the water to the full extent of the spear, from which, by a turn of the wrist, it is disconnected; the spear is then rapidly withdrawn from the water, followed in a few seconds by the shuttle-cock, this, in its turn, is followed by a Ling, which, on coming within striking distance by a sure and rapid thrust, is firmly impaled on the spear, the barb of which is made of goat's horn, and immediately leaves the shaft from which it remains suspended by a yard of line, thus the spear is instantaneously converted into a species of fishing rod with a very limited supply of tackle, and the Ling, after being hammered on the head with a piece of wood, is lifted into the canoe.

We caught no salmon; they were too late in running. Just opposite our camp was a large deserted cannery, which had been erected at considerable expense for canning the herrings, which at certain seasons crowded the inlet; but from the day of its completion no herring was again seen in those waters. A few days after our arrival I crossed the inlet to enquire for letters at Vancouver. Even the most serious matters frequently present their ludicrous side, and in spite of the sympathy I naturally felt for those who had lost their all, including many relations and friends, in the disastrous fire, I could not help feeling tickled and smiling all down one side, as some one says, on encountering a tent labelled "Town Council," in large letters,

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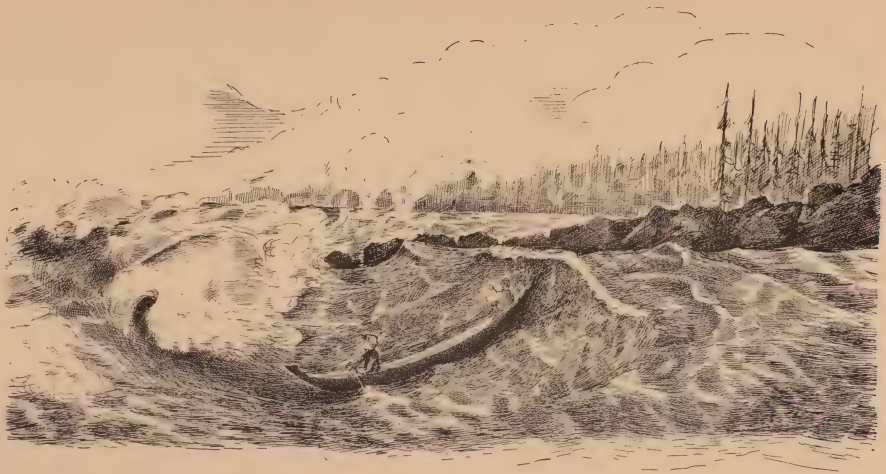
* What I believe to have been Ling were locally known as Cod.



AN AWKWARD CORNER.

and another "Messrs. ——, solicitors." That these all-important functionaries should be reduced to transacting their business in a tent, on a bare piece of charred land, struck me as very quaint. I enquired for the post-office; no one appeared to know where it was, though all were acquainted with the spot where it used to be. Some told me to go up —— street, but there was nothing to convey to my mind that any street had ever existed in the locality. I called at an ironmonger's tent to buy some lead. He solemnly pointed in the direction of his original store and replied, if I grubbed there I would find plenty. A more dismal, and, at the same time touching, spectacle I have seldom witnessed. Out of the whole of that town not one solitary house had escaped, and had the fire occurred in the night three parts of the population must have perished. Before we left hundreds of new houses had been reconstructed, which must inevitably share a similar fate on the occasion of the first favourable outbreak of fire among them.

A queer character stumbled across our encampment one day while searching for his cows, his first greeting being, at the top of his voice, in a broad Lancashire accent, "Ullo, hare you hall burned hout?" The second, on catching sight of Fred's feet, "Ho! look at 'is Ould Counthry butes." He was doing a little rough farming, and we soon became great friends, he insisting on supplying us with milk and cherries, for which he declined to accept any payment, while we provided him with crabs and fish. He used to call for my letters at Vancouver when taking over his milk to sell; but this at first led to a little confusion, for unknown to me his name happened to be the same as my own. A kitten he gave us ultimately accompanied us throughout our travels, through the presence of which many blankets and furs were saved from the ravages of innumerable mice, not to mention a quaint species of animal known as the trading rat, the proper name of which is the bushy-tailed rat. I am told it far surpasses the magpie in its thieving eccentricities by replacing everything it takes away with some other article; but I have had no opportunity of watching its manœuvres myself. It is by no means an ugly rat, with a thickly-furred and bushy tail.

It was a common sight in the Inlet—while the pigs were rooting up clams in the mud—to see crows on their backs, these immediately on a clam being turned out hopped down, seized it, and retiring to a distance, broke the shell by flying up with it, and when at a considerable elevation, letting it drop on the stones below; this I heard from a reliable source, there being no pigs in the vicinity of our camp, I had no opportunity of a personal observation. I often remarked the extraordinary attraction anything red has for humming birds, I possessed a common red tin tobacco box, and a pair of camp boots lined with red; if either of these articles were left out of doors, so surely would a humming bird present itself, to pry into them; at a future camp, one was rash enough to enter our tent, in order to enquire into the peculiar formation of an indiarubber glove lined with red flannel, poor little wretch, it paid the penalty of such inquisitiveness, for in twenty minutes it was skinned and stuffed with wool. Racoons appeared very plentiful, the mud showing frequent indication of their nightly rambles, we set some traps close to camp, in which three were very soon caught; I never found such difficulty in despatching an animal before, after the head of one had been reduced to a mash by repeated blows from a loaded stick, though quite insensible, it refused to die, and continued moaning at every breath, the others we were forced to shoot through the heart with a revolver, which caused instantaneous

death. The bay lynx, a sort of wild cat, and a small spotted skunk with a brown face, were by no means uncommon about the Inlet, though I heard of none elsewhere during my travels. While picking salmon-berries and raspberries, we occasionally saw fresh deer tracks, but the undergrowth being so dense, we seldom penetrated the timber beyond a few hundred yards. Many descriptions of berries, and small apples abounded on all sides. Old Indian hags were frequently to be seen, seeking the larger kind of clam, by burrowing in the mud with their hands, on the same principle as a dog when searching for a hidden bone, sending the refuse flying between their legs.

In certain nooks along the rocky coast smelts could be ladled out of the water in hundreds with a landing net, while in almost any spot we could be sure of catching in considerable quantities a large species of bream. Amongst those fish which we were unable to capture, but saw almost daily, were porpoises and sturgeon; thus to anyone fond of such a life, Burrard's Inlet afforded a fund of entertainment. Once, while fishing for whiting, I hooked a one pound sea trout, which instantly broke me, and leapt into the canoe on the opposite side to that on which I was fishing, having snapped the gut some three yards under water. Occasionally, a hair seal would follow in the wake of our canoe, until having satisfied its curiosity, it would gracefully sink to appear no more.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the fifth of July the tide treated us to an unexpected surprise. Soon after nine in the evening, which was about the time we usually rolled ourselves up for the night, someone remarked that the tide was unusually high. This called forth little attention, but presently it was observed that the tide was remarkably high, and, as during the ensuing quarter-of-an-hour it still continued to rise steadily, it became obvious that the matter required investigation. A close inspection went to show that a few more inches would flood us; but, as it still gradually encroached, it was evident that the fire would prove the first victim. Presently, a burst of steam notified its extinction, and with it our only means of seeing anything, except by striking matches. The table, an immovable luxury, constructed by Fred, was now above its ancles in water; all our eatables being hastily piled on the top. Fred, on inspecting his tent, declared his bed to be floating in a foot of water. Things now began to look serious, not that there was any actual danger while trees 300 feet high stood close at hand, but on peering into the darkness nothing but water was visible on all sides. Our tent stood on the highest ground, for as far as the eye could penetrate, except on the other side of the creek, which now held water to the depth of eleven feet. The canoe was anchored a mile out on what a few hours previously had been solid mud. Another inch must inevitably flood our tent, therefore, as rapidly as possible, we threw up a bank of earth on the lowest ground, which, by constant attention, was, with difficulty, induced to remain water-tight, just when an increase of half-an-inch would have settled the business, and little streams were forcing themselves over the bank which showed unmistakable signs of giving way, the water ceased to rise, and then slowly retreated. Poor Fred was the only sufferer; all his treasures were soaked, and it was quite a melancholy sight to see him on the morrow spreading his saturated writing paper and firmly glued together envelopes, with many other

cherished articles, in the sun to dry; had this occurred an hour later, when we should all have been in bed, considerable confusion would have ensued; as it was, it only tended by a little diversion to increase our delights in the surroundings.

Should anyone, after reading this description of our visit to Burrard's Inlet, decide upon undertaking a similar experiment, I warn them that from the general aspect of the place they will at the first onset experience a feeling of disappointment which they will probably be unable to shake off, but go there expecting to be confronted by little that is beautiful, and week after week fresh pleasures and interests will be discovered. Nor is successful fishing to be obtained there without a fair amount of exertion, and a canoe or boat will be found indispensable. A friend from England one day suddenly made his appearance, having learned our whereabouts, he determined to give us a surprise by suddenly presenting himself; but being unacquainted with the lay of the land, and taking a short cut in order to approach unperceived, he located himself in a well-known bog, where we immediately discovered him. He had just come from Cowichan, having enjoyed splendid sport fishing. On hearing his report, we should instantly have proceeded there, had not the hunting season been so close at hand as to leave insufficient time, for I was bound to pay a visit to Victoria to obtain provisions for the winter. Once, contrary to our usual custom, which was to leave one in camp, we all three set out for a day's fishing, thinking it was unlikely that anyone would be along during our absence, however, on our return in the evening we found, while consulting our larder on the all important matter of supper, that we had had a visitor in the form of an Indian who had abstracted all our meat consisting of a ham and some bacon, leaving nothing but a piece of fat with the representation of the foot prints of a dog made by pressing the thumb in four directions, and scratching the edge of the bacon to

imitate teeth marks. In this piece of intended deception, the wily Indian failed through lack of skill, though his little joke of depriving us of supper that night was an undeniable success. I have small doubt that the thief was an old man who used frequently to come and squat on his haunches before the fire, and while pointing to his hair, which was grizzly, would endeavour to convince us that his greyness had been occasioned by his devotion to the Roman Catholic Mission, not far distant. Mosquitoes troubled us considerably; but our chief source of annoyance was by ants, these little pests crowded in everywhere, if food was placed for safety in a cotton bag it would be found swarming with them, and the bag full of holes, they climbed on to the table, ate the food off our plates, or went down our throats perched on it, they walked up the teacups, and in their greediness fell into the tea, sinking immediately; nothing checked their ardour, until the brilliant idea of treacling the legs of the table occurred to us, though this had to be done every day, it proved a perfect success, they were unable to wade through it; but for ants in bed we found no cure. Suddenly in the night I would start round under the impression that some one had caught hold of a piece of flesh with tweezers, and on putting my hand on the place I would discover an ant trying, by hauling at my back, to convey me away to his nest, at least I conclude, judging by their usual foolish behaviour with sticks, &c., that imagining he had found something of service in their domestic economy, this was his intention; the only plan was to shake the blankets well every night before wrapping ourselves up.

On the 22nd of July, I paid a visit to Victoria to procure a stock of provisions for the winter, returning to camp two days later. It had been our original intention to winter in the Rockies, but from all I could learn, together with the impossibility of obtaining reliable imformation respecting the prospects of good hunting within a reasonable distance, I feared such an expedition would in all probability turn out a failure. We therefore determined to retire to a place near Kishpyox, some two hundred miles up the Skeena, which had been highly recommended for foxes and other animals calculated to ensure a successful winter's trapping; we were anxious too, to experience the novelty of a climate where the thermometer radiates between zero and sixty below. Therefore, with the intention of spending some eight months in an old deserted log house, which existed in those frigid regions, we bid a final adieu to Burrard's Inlet with its seductive allurements, and tumbling all our properties into our canoe, and the boat of our friend Tom, who had just brought us a carelessly delayed telegram, which stated that the "Boscowitz" would sail on the following day: this piece of information left us but an hour in which to pack up, cross three miles of water, and catch the boat from Vancouver to Victoria; however with Tom's invaluable aid, all was successfully accomplished, and finally, after clearing the narrows, we found ourselves with every prospect of reaching Victoria in due course. On the boat we experienced rather a blow by learning that the great annual regatta was to be held on the following day, in honour of which event a general holiday was proclaimed, owing to which we were prevented purchasing many necessary articles, which we were therefore forced to do without.

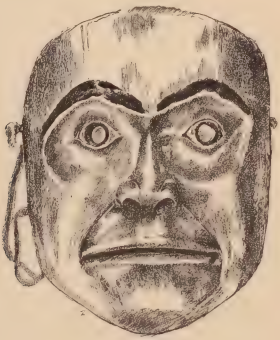
CHAPTER VIII.

THE *Boscowitz* not sailing till six o'clock p.m., L. and I did the regatta in style in our canoe. Anyone who chanced to notice us at all would have supposed that some miner had borrowed a nursemaid, who he was taking for an airing; but what did it matter? We cared for nobody and nobody cared for us, only unfortunately we were recognised by a friend, who, I fear, must have greatly scandalised the fair occupants of his boat by acknowledging such doubtful-looking acquaintances. I had never before seen a regatta held in any spot to be compared in its beauty to the north arm of Victoria, and I much doubt if any other town possesses a more fascinating and picturesque strip of water than this little inlet, surrounded by densely-wooded hills, intersected by numerous coves and grassy slopes extending to the water's edge. No more charming spot for picnicing could be desired.

Having witnessed one of the most entertaining incidents of the programme, namely, the race restricted to Indian squaws, for which some three or four canoe crews contested, we returned to the *Boscowitz*, which was shortly due to leave, but was unavoidably detained for an hour by the non-appearance of the purser, who, holding at that time the proud position of champion sculler of B. C., found a difficulty in tearing himself away from so engrossing a spectacle. Johnnie, the Chinese steward, informed us, with glee, that "all cockee-rochee dead," but on seeking our cabin we found that, though slightly reduced in numbers, a large quantity had evaded the zealous Johnnie's poison. We soon ran into the regions of perpetual rain, eventually landing at Metlakahtla on the 11th August. It being as yet early for proceeding to our winter quarters, we proposed to hunt in a place known as Sea Lake, for I was anxious to procure some good goats' masks, my former ones being much damaged: therefore, engaging an Indian boy and a half-breed hunter named Roger, who, from former experience, I knew to be a useful man, we started for the lake, which is in reality no lake at all, but an exceedingly pretty inlet off Granville canal, exhibiting the same quaint formation at the mouth as Burrard's inlet, only on a much smaller scale, for its narrows, being even smaller in proportion, are no more than fifteen yards across. Through this the tide rushes in and out, defying all possibility of an entrance, except at slack water. We reached this inlet after a day-and-a-half's canoeing, the last day being unusually hard work with only four hands, and two canoes to manage. Here we spent eleven days, but owing to incessant rain I only left camp on the 17th for one day's hunting. After a tedious climb of some three hours over fallen trees and slippery rocks, we arrived at the summit of the mountain, everywhere covered with grass except on the north-east, which was still deep in crusted snow. After about half-a-mile's walk a fine black-tail buck suddenly appeared from behind a rock, but was away before I could sight him. Running round a corner I got a fair chance at him, while standing fully exposed to view on a patch of snow. It was an indifferent shot, but had the desired effect, causing instantaneous death, the bullet having pierced his neck. We left him until our return, Roger going in one direction to look out for goats and I in another. Scarcely had I walked a hundred yards when a second buck seemed to rise out of

the snow, about fifty yards distant, but was off in an instant across the hard crust. I took a hurried aim and fired, apparently with no result, but a lucky second barrel doubled him up, and I saw him slide about forty yards down a slight incline on the smooth and slippery snow. On following upon his track I was surprised to see lying in front of me a tuft of hair, which turned out to be his tail, the result of the first shot. About one hundred yards further lay the deer unable to rise, but not dead. A deep probe with my knife quickly terminated his existence. At this moment Roger came running up to say that a band of ten goats were asleep under a rock; we immediately started in search of them; he had seen them after my first shot at the second deer, but the second barrel must have alarmed them, for in the far distance they could be distinguished galloping up another small mountain, we at once followed, and in about a quarter of an hour, came suddenly upon two which evidently did not belong to the band we were following, and were no more than forty yards away, but having taken fright, there was no time to be lost, for in another ten yards they would have been out of sight, a hasty shot followed, and I could see the larger of the two was wounded, though I feared not seriously, however on reaching the spot we found he had only gone a few yards before falling dead, we now continued in pursuit of the others. An hour's climb brought us well among them; they had scattered in all directions, the ground being rough and precipitous. Roger, after letting himself down a steep rock, took my rifle, while I followed, and just as I reached the ground he espied a goat immediately above us, as invariably happened on such occasions, instead of handing me the rifle, he fired at the goat, down it came, and out of the way he jumped, but only just in time, for the animal fell exactly where he had stood, he instantly threw down the rifle on the bare rocks, and seized it by the hind leg, though not before in its endeavour to escape it had scrambled half way over the edge of the precipice immediately behind us. At this moment several more ran past above on a narrow ledge, I snatched up the rifle only to discover that I was vainly tugging at the useless trigger in connection with the recently discharged barrel, at that moment another rushed by, receiving the left bullet behind the shoulder, it crawled but a few yards to die. I now decided that as the hair on the goats killed was not fully grown, we would hunt no more, and indeed we had enough to carry as it was, though we had brought the boy to help pack, we therefore retraced our steps, skinning and collecting the heads and meat, as we went, and were approaching the place where the second deer lay, when a third buck appeared, standing on a solitary pedestal of rock, some forty yards distant, I had no intention of shooting, as I considered we had enough meat, but the Indian begged so hard that I raised my rifle, a second too late though, for the deer thinking he had waited long enough started off unharmed at the very instant I pulled; the feeling of mercy I possessed but a minute before now forsook me, I ran round a rock to cut him off, and succeeded in putting in a shot which broke the foreleg at the shoulder, but this failed to stop him ere he was again out of sight, the next I saw of him was at about two hundred yards, still running, I sat down, elevated the sight, and took a steady aim, pulled and missed, then the second barrel, and he fell without a move. This buck though still in the velvet, carried a good head, which with the mask I took. Curiously enough these three deer were killed within a radius of two hundred yards; we now set to work to take all the meat we could carry, at least Roger and the boy did, I contenting

myself with the head and mask of one deer, the antlers of another, and the heads and masks of two goats, with about seven pounds of fat, which the Indian had secreted up the neck of a goat, and of the presence of which I had no idea, or it would have been thrown out long ere we reached camp, for though my pack was the lightest, yet so awkward was it, that I could hardly crawl back, both hands were occupied, one in holding the horns of one deer, and the entire head of another on my shoulder and round my neck, the other in keeping the goat's horns from pointing towards my body, for, being suspended from my shoulders by long necks, every time I fell, and one falls pretty often, I ran imminent risk of being stabbed by their sharp pointed horns, or having my eyes poked out by those of the deer; I certainly shall never undertake a similar burden in such a country again. For the last mile anything larger than a straw in my trail was liable to upset me, and I was forced to take to sitting down and sliding, whenever the ground was sufficiently wet, and not too steep; however, camp was reached before dark, and I look back with pleasure on



Indian dancing mask.

what I consider an unusually lucky day, both on account of the game found, and the remarkably successful result of fluky shooting, for throughout the day I obtained but one standing shot. After this it continued too wet to hunt, though before leaving I sent Fred out in order to obtain a buck to take back with us, but the latter not presenting itself, he was forced to return with a doe.

The Indian and boy seized this opportunity to fetch all the meat I had left on the mountain, the fact of its having lain about for some four days appeared in no way detrimental in their eyes. Hair seals constantly floated past our camp; having one day shot at, and wounded one, we immediately gave chase in the small canoe. Not wishing to spoil the head, I tried, when near enough, to spear it, but after an hour's hunt it became gradually stronger, and finally disappeared. I could frequently have shot it in the back as it dived, but, under such circumstances, if killed, the hair seal

sinks, rarely appearing again. Roger said if I wanted another he would call one, we, therefore, landed, and hid the canoe, I remaining close by, while Roger taking the white covering of calico which served to protect our canoe from the sun, wrapped it tightly round him, leaving nothing but his face exposed, and got on to a solitary rock surrounded by water where he laid down, twisting himself into an exact resemblance of a seal. He then proceeded to raise himself up and down on his elbows, blowing and snorting, occasionally growling loudly, while appearing to feed on an imaginary fish. He had not been thus engaged more than a minute when up popped the head of a seal within forty yards, though none had been previously in sight, I fired, and missed, my only excuse for such an indifferent shot is that my eyes were so full of tears from suppressed laughter at the ridiculous appearance and comical antics of Roger that I could hardly see the sight, a funnier spectacle I have never witnessed, nor a more successful method of fooling seals, the white calico gave the exact appearance of a wet seal with the sun shining on it.

Roger, who was by profession, a seal hunter, told me that numbers of the fur seal were procured in this fashion, though the usual method is to stealthily approach them in a canoe while sleeping on the water, and shoot them through the head, or murder them in thousands with a club on land. The weather kept so wet, that I found it impossible to properly dry the goat's and deer's masks, and I fear they will prove very indifferently preserved. Further hunting being impossible under such circumstances, in conjunction with the still more important fact of the game not yet being in season, we returned to Metlakahtla.

I was at first much perplexed to account for the teeth of the coast Indians being in some cases worn away to the very roots, and always considerably shortened through living on salmon, on to which in the process of drying on the shore large quantities of sand adhere; whereas the river Indians rejoice in full length teeth, their salmon being dried away from any sand. A particularly disgusting odour, too, pervades the coast Indians, the result I expect of consuming large quantities of oulachon oil.

CHAPTER IX.

THE first night after returning to Metlakahtla, having hung the heads of my blacktail out of doors to dry, some dog decamped with one, nor could I find any trace of it afterwards. We were destined to remain here much longer than we had intended, for by no inducements could we persuade the Indians to quit their occupation of watching a party of surveyors, whom they so molested as to prevent the carrying out of their orders from the Government, to complete a survey of the Indian territory, which proceeding was on a legal point resented by the Metlakahtla Indians, with the result that, so far as we were concerned, those who had nothing to do refused to allow others to earn any pay on the plea that their entire force was required to restrain some half a dozen white men from carrying out their instructions; to accomplish which purpose the whole male population of the town save two or three were absent. Thus week after week were we delayed in a place capable of affording but little diversion, the only occupation we found was to make daily raids on the Canadian geese, which were fast beginning to appear from their summer resorts in the north, upon the flats at low water, they afforded us good sport and constituted our principal food, most days we would return with a few which we usually procured by canoeing some two miles out to a small cluster of rocks, over which some were sure to fly on their way to feed. How I longed on these occasions for a double 8 bore with eight or nine drams of Powder and a heavy charge of buckshot, with which I could constantly have raked a line of ten with most disastrous results, but I was forced to content myself with my poor little 12 bore, its most creditable performance being on one occasion three geese with the right, and one with the left barrel, the fourth we lost owing to darkness setting in during the chase. Anyone who has tried shooting these large heavily feathered birds, will be fully aware of the difficulty of stopping them. A variety of sandpipers with an occasional snipe and golden plover would go to complete the day's bag. Occasionally a hawk, declining to be alarmed in spite of holloing and yelling on our parts, would seize and carry off a wounded or dead sandpiper ere we could secure it. It soon became evident that if we delayed any longer we stood a fair chance of never reaching our destination, we were therefore compelled to engage an unknown crew, with whom we arranged for transport to Kishpyox. After filling the canoe about a ton of supplies remained over, these we were forced to leave behind to follow as best they might; we experienced a vast difference between being our own masters, and having to conform to an Indian's idea of comfort which was most noticeable in the selection of a camping place each evening, their notion of luxury on such occasions being restricted to the presence of two articles, firewood and water, under these circumstances they invariably selected the dirtiest and most uncomfortable spots on the river. We inevitably found ourselves in one of three positions, either on large round shingles, where propping up the tent, was attended with great labour and difficulty; in loose sand, which found its way into every article; or on the side of a steep bank, where the very bed itself worked out of the tent during the night. Remonstrance was useless, they were to receive $95 for the job, and stopped when and where they pleased. One night, so

cramped was our position, that we were obliged to take in the rotten stump of a large tree, there being no room for the tent on either side of it, this unwelcome guest, though exceedingly pretty as a work of nature, was even too soft to sit on, and must have been the asylum for all the spiders within a quarter of a mile. During the night I clawed thirteen off my face, of all sizes, and threw them away with a shiver of disgust; and doubtless as many more strolled over L., but she was always too busy sleeping to attend to such details.

This river travelling we found weary work, we endured seventeen days of poleing, shoving, lifting, towing with a rope, and occasionally packing the freight past some spot more impassable than usual. Paddles were useless except for crossing from one eddy to another, during which performance, on one occasion, we were very awkwardly situated by coming in contact with the bottom of the river, the canoe bumped heavily three times, and had it stuck, we should have overturned to a certainty. The fury of the water in places was tremendous, much too varied and complicated for description, sometimes with five of us on the rope and two poleing, for we had been obliged to engage an extra Indian on the way, our progress was scarcely visible. All along the banks and shallows lay hundreds and hundreds of spent salmon, filling the air with a sickening smell, this carrion was thoroughly appreciated by the white headed eagles and gulls; and doubtless we should have fallen in with a bear or two, but for the abominable yelling of the Indians—who, never silent throughout the passage, appear to derive infinite satisfaction from hearing their unmusical voices echo from mountain to mountain. The bears feed largely on these dead salmon, their tracks being plentiful all along the river banks. Having found fresh caribou tracks one Sunday—for my crew were so far Christianised, as to regard the Sabbath as a day of rest, wherein they could indulge to the fullest extent their naturally indolent natures, by alternately eating and sleeping throughout the entire day—I promised them a holiday with full pay, if they would take us to a place where I could hunt with any prospect of success; to this they readily acceded, selecting the most frequented spot on the river, namely, Lorne Creek, where they landed us at night, and from whence to strike game within a two days' journey, was an impossibility. On discovering that they had simply studied their own convenience, in choosing this place, I endeavoured to re-assemble them in the morning, for an immediate start, but found it impossible to do so—they having got among their friends, were thoroughly enjoying themselves at my expense, with the satisfaction of having bested me. Seeing no help for it, we spent the day in inspecting the mining on the creek, and observing the process of gold washing.

Next day we resumed our journey, and I was puzzled to find that above the big cañon, a somewhat formidable obstruction to canoes during high water, there were no dead salmon; at least I only saw three. I was, therefore, forced to conclude, perhaps erroneously, that after spawning, in passing through this rugged and narrow passage the weak fish were battered to death; quantities of those I observed below being seriously damaged. I at first imagined that possibly the salmon did not pass up the Canon, which would have accounted for all the dead ones being below; but I found it presented no insurmountable obstacle to their upward journey; in fact, it was little more than the commencement of a prolonged struggle to reach Babine Lake. The river above was crowded with strong and healthy fish. Many persons belonging to the Skeena believe, and indeed it appeared to be the universal impression,

that after spawning, the salmon all die a natural death, a circumstance I cannot credit; for though they die in thousands in Babine Lake and River, yet I have seen many old spent fish within sixty miles of the sea, with no hindrance to check their reaching it, and as the water where I saw them was so thick, as to prevent a fish being distinguished at over a foot in depth, I naturally concluded that, for every one I observed, there must have been hundreds unperceived, all of which I surmised gained the salt water in perfect safety. While on so interesting a topic as salmon, I would crave the reader's indulgence, while narrating the results of a few personal observations and experiences. At the same time, I am quite prepared to learn hereafter that any theory I now hold on the subject is erroneous in the extreme; therefore, beyond the facts which I am about to state, I lay no claim to being an authority simply requesting the reader to entertain or reject my views as pleases him best.

I have made no special study of the many peculiarities of this fish, having simply been a diligent observer when opportunity offered; nor have I ever realised more fully than at the moment of offering an opinion, the forcible truth of the old proverb, that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." I am even doubtful in my ignorance whether the seven—as I am informed—or possibly even more than seven varieties of salmon inhabiting the Skeena are, any one of them, the true salmon. I opened several salmon taken in the nets at the mouth of the Skeena, in all of which I found quantities of sand eels, and from one to three fish about the size of a dace. According to the Indians, upon whose veracity I place little reliance, the various kinds inhabiting the Skeena are legion. They state that to each creek flowing into the main river belongs a different variety, which appears there to spawn, and that when shown one they can tell from which creek it was taken. The correctness of this I have been unable to ascertain, but from personal observation, I have little doubt that the Skeena river salmon would afford a considerably lengthened period of investigation to any naturalist interested in the subject. My opinion is, that the principal reason salmon very rarely feed in fresh water is because they find nothing there suitable to their tastes with the exception possibly of worms and minnows. I once saw one in England feeding, as I supposed on the latter in still water. I failed actually to observe a minnow go into his mouth, but he frequently darted into the midst of a crowd of them, and, on my throwing him a prawn, he immediately devoured it. I believe that when a salmon takes an artificial fly he does so, solely because he mistakes it for some marine insect or fish, upon which he has been in the habit of feeding, but has seen nothing of since entering fresh water. It is only necessary to examine an artificial fly from below when submerged to be struck by its utter want of resemblance to the same article when held in the hand, its appearance from the salmon's point of view being more that of some salt water creature, such as a shrimp, prawn, etc., than anything else; yellow, grey or fancy eagles, when properly worked, much resemble the appearance and erratic motions of prawns, which, when not gliding steadily forward by a series of sharp flicks with the tail propel themselves backwards in jerks, they also resemble more or less a large variety of other creatures found in the sea, their wholesale resemblance I think accounts for this description of fly being so successful a bait on the Hampshire Avon, where the water is clear and by no means rapid. My reason for quoting this river is that, living on its banks, I have had greater experience in its waters than in any others; its salmon seem more difficult to deceive than those of most rivers.

The voraciousness of a spent salmon when in the kelt stage is well known to most anglers, little comes amiss to him, from a huge and indifferently spun pike bait—real or artificial—to the fly of any pattern or size, nor does he object to being hooked and landed a second time within the month, hunger appears to have deprived him of all instinct, yet how dainty has he become on his return to fresh water after the complete restoration of health and beauty, probably never deigning to notice your most artistically placed fly, the mere dragging of which through the water would a month before have fetched him eagerly from the furthest distance within sight, but he is now no longer hungry, indeed I doubt but that he has been over-fed, hence if he deigns to take the fly at all, it is probably because it bears a varied resemblance to some favourite or accustomed dainty, but give him time, he has only recently entered the river, perhaps in an hour or so he will feel inclined for lunch. I think that so comparatively few salmon being taken with the rod in the sea may be accounted for from the fact, that in so large an expanse of water, where one particular spot holds little advantage over another, fish must necessarily be greatly scattered, and perhaps for an hour you are never casting within reach of one, and if you do occasionally place your lure over him, and he is on the feed, the chances are he much prefers the natural repast upon which he is engaged, to anything you are offering him, though you may thus unsuccessfully fish over one in salt water while surrounded with every luxury, yet perhaps the first cast will take the same fish in the river, where having seen nothing resembling his customary food for at least some hours, and being as yet unused to fasting, he siezes the opportunity to snatch a hasty meal from your deceptive fly. After a few days of river life, I think it quite possible that the compulsory fast lessens the keen sense of hunger, perhaps he begins to forget even the appearance of food, and so matters go from bad to worse until he becomes stale, finally ere spawning declining any food whatever, though an occasional freshet undoubtedly stirs up the fish and whets their appetite. I base this theory upon the fact that a large percentage of fresh run salmon take the fly freely, but that the longer they remain in the river before spawning, the more slender the prospect of catching them. There can be no doubt that certain conditions of atmosphere tend to lend a more natural appearance to the fly in the eyes of a salmon; even to the angler, the gut is more apparent on certain days than on others. While in America in '86, I read an article in an English newspaper, wherein the writer stated the notion of lampreys adhering to and feeding off other fish was old-fashioned and absurd, though possibly old-fashioned, it is none the less correct. I once killed a 25 lb. salmon in the Avon after an hour-and-a-half's tussle, being delayed by having to send for a boat. Before this fish was gaffed, I noticed something peculiar sticking out of its side, and eventually while kicking in the bottom of the punt it dislodged a lamprey of about six or seven inches in length; the spot where the lamprey had located itself was devoid of scales and raw, the skin having been apparently eaten through, the power of adhesion in this case must have been very great to resist for so long a time the frantic struggles of the hooked salmon, even supposing that he had not previously done his utmost to detach from his side so fretful and unwelcome a companion. Once while playing a salmon, an incident occurred to me which has probably never happened to anyone before, nor is likely to do so in future. Never previously had I heard of a bird selecting the angler's rod as a resting place at such a critical moment; but a chiff-chaff chose this opportunity for perching on the top

joint of my rod while considerably curved with the strain of a 30 lb. fish, here the bird remained unalarmed for perhaps half a minute. To return to the Skeena, which is inhabited, I believe, by from three to four species of salmon (though, as I stated, report vastly exceeds this number), which have their various seasons for running. I know of no petty annoyance more galling than to find one's self situated as I was, simply surrounded by these fish, which by no possible means could be induced to take either fly, spoon, or minnow, though an occasional sea-trout was not quite so particular. I was told that the Skeena river salmon, kelts included, were never caught with a hook, but September was the only month I gave them a trial, at which time the water was at its lowest stage. I have never heard of salmon being taken in any of the western rivers of British Columbia with a hook, though plenty are so captured in the sea and Cowichan Lake. They are so plentiful on occasions that by the sides of the cañons the Indians scoop them up in huge dip-nets with little difficulty.

CHAPTER X.

ON September 28, we reached the Forks of the Skeena, camping a mile below the Indian Village, in fact close to the spot where we were ultimately destined to spend the winter; shortly after turning in for the night, we were disturbed by the Indians, who, having discovered our presence, forthwith held a council, which resulted in the arrival of six of the tribe, who demanded to see me, I declined to turn out, directing our interpreter (a boy from Metlakahtla) to say that I would see them if necessary in the morning, they informed him with much warmth that we should not be allowed to proceed, but must return to the coast on the morrow. Next day, L. and I walked to the village with our interpreter, leaving orders for our canoe to pick us up there, intending after an interview with the chief, to continue our journey, however, on entering his lodge where the members of that all important assemblage, called the council, were gathered together, a glance around sufficed to assure us that our presence was regarded with much ill feeling and hostility. Do and say what we would, we found it impossible to convince them that we were not surveyors come to deprive them of their lands; finally, as they utterly declined to allow us to proceed, we decided to remain one day, and then failing to instil common sense into their dull brains, we determined to put their threats of forcible detention to the test; council after council was held in our honour during the day, yet they continued to behold us in the light of a formidable enemy. On the morrow, finding them still of the same determination, we decided to stand no more nonsense, and in any case to make an attempt to proceed; we therefore ordered our crew, much against their inclination, to man the canoe preparatory to a start, and surrounded by a band of wildly gesticulating Indians, one of whom stood knife in hand ready to cut our tow line, we solemnly took our seats; a considerable crowd had by this time assembled on the shore, some of whom menacingly held our tow line which they threatened to cut. I therefore landed in order to hold a final parley with the chief, which resulted in my writing a few lines on a slip of paper, to the effect that I was no surveyor, and that I should decline to accept their lands, if even in a fit of generosity they should offer them to me. Miserable

jabbering idiots, had I known them then as I do now, I should not have wasted a moment's thought over their cowardly threats. Seeing that we were determined, together with the valuable document held by the chief, the signature of which apparently produced a deep interest, they instantly subsided, and we passed on unmolested, much to the satisfaction of our trembling crew, some of whom looked as livid as an Indian can look, unaided by soap and water.

It was but a day's journey to Kishpyox, on the way we fell in with Mr. Tomlinson, Mr. Duncan's colleague, who, from having lived among the Kishpyox Indians retained some influence over them, he had heard of our difficulty and was then, very kindly on his way to our assistance; he and Mr. Duncan rule the Indians to a greater extent than anyone else far beyond this point, but I much doubt if even Mr. Duncan's power would prove efficient in preventing them from taking their own course in certain emergencies.

An Indian Bowl.

Mr. Tomlinson now accompanied us to the small village in his canoe, promising to see us safely installed in our winter quarters before leaving for the coast. Just previous to reaching our destination, we met with the only serious accident that befel us during the journey, while rounding a point, the swift current caught the bow of the canoe, rendering futile, all efforts to keep her straight, eventually sweeping her broadside on to a solitary and partly submerged rock, she narrowly escaped turning over, and with a single report, split from stem to stern, leaking rapidly from the now gaping crack, we were forced to make for the nearest accessible landing place, baling hard in order to keep the freight dry, this unfortunate termination, necessitated an uncomfortable camp, for it was impossible to go further without considerable repairs. Mr. Tomlinson proceeded to the village to arrange that our freight should be packed the first thing next day, the place we had selected being about seven miles distant. Imagine our surprise when on his return he told us they refused to pack our things under a prohibitorily exorbitant price amounting to something like £100, the whole of the following day was spent in the customary councils, without which no conclusion can apparently be arrived at upon the most trivial subject; throughout this, a decidedly hostile feeling was maintained towards us. Mr. Tomlinson finally remarked, "the fact is they wont have you in their country, if you do get where you intend and I leave you, you will be cut off from the river and thoroughly in their power, their evident intention is to molest you; take my advice, therefore, and give up the project or I cannot answer for your safety;" this from a man thoroughly acquainted with the character of these people could only impress me with the absolute necessity of giving up my previous plans for the ensuing winter.

How little could even Mr. Tomlinson depend on his knowledge of these people, is seen from the fact that he was unable to instal us in the very country in which he had lived so long, and from which we were now ignominiously forced to beat a retreat; the only plan open to us was to seek some other hunting ground, though a move to any

distance was rendered impossible from the fact that all our resources had been expended in provisioning ourselves for the winter, which, together with travelling expenses left something under $ 100 in hand, a further increase to this sum would not be available for seven months, besides which severe cold might set in any day, in which event a house was absolutely necessary. If we returned to the coast it would be to spend the winter in an almost incessant deluge of rain, and the only game, wolves, deer and goats. I had thoroughly relied on a successful winter's trapping in the locality we were now forced to vacate, and the sum necessary to take us anywhere else, we could not procure, therefore bitterly disappointed we decided to return to the Forks where I hoped to find sufficient game to keep me fairly employed until the spring.

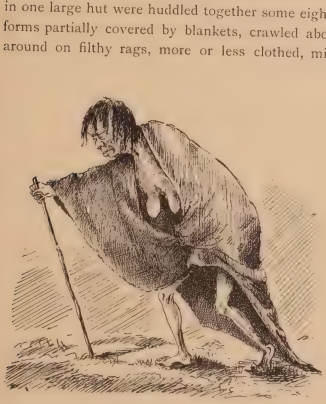
The canoe having been temporarily repaired at the expense of several blankets, during the intervening day since reaching Kishpyox, proved, after replacing the freight, just capable of transferring us to the Forks. I proposed building a hut about ten miles off at the foot of some convenient mountain. This proceeding the still suspicious Indians utterly refused to sanction, magnanimously granting us permission to locate ourselves in their filthy village, which we decidedly declined to do, and after considerable trouble we were forced to make the best of a triangular spot a little below the village, thickly studded with huge cotton trees, bounded on the west by the

Skeena, on the east and south by the Buckley River, and on the north by the Indians. This place was evidently selected for us in order to insure the impossibility of our becoming fixtures, for in the summer, on the rising of the waters, it was occasionally completely flooded. The cotton logs were so heavy and unwieldy as to necessitate the combined strength of six men to move them, under these circumstances we were forced to employ Indians to construct the shell of our hut, but ere they had finished our funds gave out, and we completed the work ourselves, finally turning out a very creditable little shanty, in the fitting up of which we received considerable aid and

kindness from Mr. Clifford, the manager of the Hudson Bay Store, who by procuring for us such materials as slabs, &c., from the Indians prevented us from being extensively robbed, for if an Indian happens to discover that you urgently require anything with which he alone can provide you, he immediately places an exorbitant price upon the article. I will not dwell upon the at first insurmountable difficulty of constructing a substantial fireplace out of round stones and loose sediment from the river's bank. With the aid of some pieces of sheet iron we turned out what ultimately became the envy of all beholders, the most luxurious white man never having previously thought of consoling himself with anything more cheerful than an iron stove. The fact of no firewood existing within a very considerable distance proved a constant source of heavy and uninteresting labour, which was principally undertaken by Fred. It soon became apparent that the proceeds of the winter's trapping would be extremely limited, resulting in tramping some hundred or so miles for every animal captured, the whole country being overrun with Indians, wherever I went my steps were dogged and every proceeding anxiously watched. I rarely set a trap that was not visited by my enquiring neighbours, who occasionally trampled down the snow over it in order to prevent its springing, added to which when I was successful in destroying a wolf or so, steps were taken to prevent the repetition of such an event.

I shortly confirmed the impression, which, since my visit to British Columbia, had been steadily forcing itself upon me, though from previously slight experience in America, I arrived with a heart full of compassion and sympathy for what I then imagined to be the noble savages, whose numbers were gradually but surely diminishing under the increasing presence of the white man. I thought it cruel, that the race must eventually be extinguished by the oppression and hardships necessarily enforced upon them by the usurpation of their former territory. I knew that they were but following out the law of nature, which insists that the stronger shall survive, but I felt for them deeply. I did not know them then, I had had no insight into their character, utterly and marvellously devoid of one solitary redeeming point. I had not been subjected to their insolent lying and thieving natures. But I shortly learned to value them at their true worth, the result of which valuation confirms me in the opinion, even when opposed to the most powerful argument conceivable in their favour, that the sooner every vestige of this almost inhuman being (whose very bestiality, thanks to his possession of the power of reason is inimitable by the most repulsive of animals) is wiped from the face of the earth, the greater the advantage to the remainder of its inhabitants ; hard words I acknowledge, but go and see them in their homes, study their want of character, associate with creatures, who from the cradle have derived pleasure from the torture of dumb animals, whose nature is utterly devoid of gratitude, whose very language contains no equivalent for "thank you," study them as I have been forced to do, and if then you share not my opinion, you must at least feel disgusted and humiliated, by finding so repulsive a beast formed in the same mould as yourself, and retaining to all outward appearance, the qualities of a man. Did I think that even one more Duncan existed, or was in process of creation, then I should say, spare a few of them, but I fear his like will not be seen again, therefore I say, let them go, and if their extinction can be honourably and reasonably hastened, lose not so favourable an opportunity of ridding the earth of so unearthly a burden. Having acquired few experiences, save those unsought, among the Indians

throughout the dreary winter, I trust the reader will pardon occasional allusions to them, and that he will at the same time fully understand that the word Indian, though covering a large collection of tribes, is used by me solely in connection with those with whom I have come in contact. The first I had much to do with were the Timsians, around the mouth of the Skeena, some I found serviceable and attentive others bad and worthless, but for private reasons I have no desire to discuss the merits of this tribe, who are principally under the control of the only man who ever thoroughly understood the race. I shall therefore confine myself chiefly to the Giatikshans with whose varied customs I became intimate. I much doubt if these Indians differ materially from the many other branches by whom they are surrounded, so that my remarks may be pretty generally applied to the majority of Indians in this division. On my first arrival at the Forks I was forced to attend a council held in the chief's lodge, where I beheld the most disgusting and revolting sights, only equalled, but in a manner far less objectionable to the observer in the monkey house at the Zoo, here in one large hut were huddled together some eighty people. Old hags, their withered forms partially covered by blankets, crawled about on sticks, men and children lay around on filthy rags, more or less clothed, mingled with miserable skeletons of dogs to the number of about thirty. Women were busily engaged in picking the vermin out of one another's heads, these they ate greedily, occasionally even searching for a dropped one, which when recovered shared the customary fate; it was hardly possible to imagine that these were human beings who could be so disgustingly degraded.



There, too, I saw a piteous sight, my attention being attracted to a dirty heap of rags by the small moans of anguish uttered incessantly by a miserable little fragment of a boy about ten years of age, whose face, drawn and pinched from long suffering, wore an unearthly appearance. He lay naked with the exception of a handkerchief tied round his leg, that being the only attempt made to mend the broken limb, broken months before, yet still causing intense suffering, as could be seen from the small bony hand which constantly sought the fractured part to endeavour by rubbing to relieve the ceaseless pain, the damage I deemed of too long standing for other than a professional to deal with then, yet one would have supposed that even an Indian could have conceived a superior splint to a mere handkerchief, four months later this miserable little sufferer still existed, pieces of decayed bone frequently coming away, though marvellous to relate, he ultimately recovered his health. The Indians around appeared perfectly callous to his suffering, a short time after this they even turned a comrade in a helpless

condition out of their lodge, he was dying of consumption, but annoyed those about him by moaning: he soon terminated his existence in a tent which had been erected over him, his mother used to sit night after night in the bitterest cold yelling and singing over his grave for four months after. Such a proceeding does not arise as one would suppose from grief, but is according to Indian custom. While living in the village many incidents similar to these came under our notice; but when we moved into our shanty we were thankful to pass peaceful nights and days comparatively undisturbed by Indian horrors.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Indians of the Rockies own "Squaws," and are the possessors of a more or less numerous supply of "papooses." Here they marry wives and talk of their families. They term the old women hags, and most graphic is the resemblance. These old hags too feeble to fetch firewood, and the others too lazy to do so, each inhabitant in a lodge being obliged to provide their own fuel for cooking, will make a small bundle of sticks last a surprising long time. They crawl to the large open fireplace situated in the centre of the lodge, from which the smoke ascends through a hole in the roof, constructed apparently by the explosion of a considerable amount of gunpowder, so irregular is the orifice, kindle their few sticks and cook their piece of salmon. When this cooking is finished they spit on the sticks, and return with them to bed, depositing them under their rags in readiness for the next meal; nor will they allow another to make use of their fire. Their dogs being never fed, except for about a week before they are required for packing or tobogganing, are ever in a starving condition. During the winter I was among them, owing to unusually extensive feasting, the supply of dried salmon was nearly exhausted, and the dogs literally starved to death. It was a common event to see one lying dead by the trail, having died in harness, under the kicks and otherwise brutal treatment of a fiendish master. It was dangerous even to approach an Indian dwelling at this period unprovided with a stick, owing to their starving ferocity. They devoured every description of filth they could discover. One once snapped the cloth with which Fred was wiping out a pan, from his hand, and swallowed it in a single gulp. To leave the door open for a minute meant the loss of every edible article within reach. Even on going out a dog would frequently push past. Many and many a dinner did we lose by such means, nor at night did they hesitate to scramble on to the roof of our hut in their endeavours to find an entrance. It was truly piteous to see these poor starving animals wandering about, making a passing meal by endeavouring to extract nutriment, by chewing up an old fruit tin. Later in the winter we were only troubled by the presence of one, which having become strong upon the scraps thrown out of the hut, succeeded in keeping away all other intruders. He would sleep under the snow near the trail all night, with the thermometer far below zero, in order to secure his breakfast in the morning. Indians are inconceivably disgusting feeders. I have seen them eat that which a bear would not touch; in fact, they are only equalled though not surpassed, in this respect, by their dogs.

which devour nothing that their masters would not willingly have shared, or in all probability have taken the whole of, had they come across it first, excepting possibly, tin pots, oil paint, dish cloths, fork handles, and a few other equally indigestible articles, all of which, though appearing to agree with the dogs, I think calculated to have an opposite effect on a human being. It used to surprise us, that whenever we bought grouse or hares from an Indian they were invariably minus their insides. These particular dainties we found they looked upon as their perquisites, and ate just as they came from the bird or animal, consuming everything they found therein. Even could certain indescribable horrors, of which I have been the actual witness, be written, I could not hope to be believed were I to recount them; nor, even knowing Indians as I now do, could I have given such things credit had I not seen for myself. What I have observed could never have been enacted by the lower animals, as only those gifted with the power of reason would be capable of utilising it to so abominable an end. Let us, however, leave so distasteful a subject, which, were it possible, I would qualify in a measure by the recital of some deed of grace on the part of an Indian; but of the occurrence of such a phenomenon I have never heard in real life, nor have I ever observed one little point to indicate that his whole composition was not a conglomeration of vices. I must even deprive him of what has been described as the wonderful sight of the noble savage, unimpaired by the glaring gas and late hours of civilised life. Now, my experience of this ignoble being goes to prove that one of his principal derangements is either total or partial blindness. I have seen more of such cases among the comparatively few Indians with whom I have associated, than I ever observed in the whole of my existence among white people. This diseased state of the eye is, I have little doubt, to a considerable extent caused by the fact that they spend the greater portion of their lives in a more or less dense cloud of smoke, though oddly enough the proportion of partially blind children being nearly as great as that of the adults would point to the probability of blindness having become hereditary among them, though another prevalent disease is probably the chief agent. I have been unable to distinguish any superiority in the vision of a sound Indian over that of a white man, of course, from frequent collision with game, he gains the advantage of instantly recognising, say a stationary deer in what would appear to the uneducated eye as nothing more unusual than a dead bush. By his long experience he is enabled immediately to realise the true nature of what he sees, in this experience lies his sole advantage; the white man observes each object just as clearly, but having seen, fails to connect what he takes for the stump of a tree with the outline of a bear; thus for want of adaptation the white man passes unheeded as a stump, what he of a life's experience, immediately recognises as an animal, thus I consider that the actual sight of the Indian is no better than that of any other sound race.

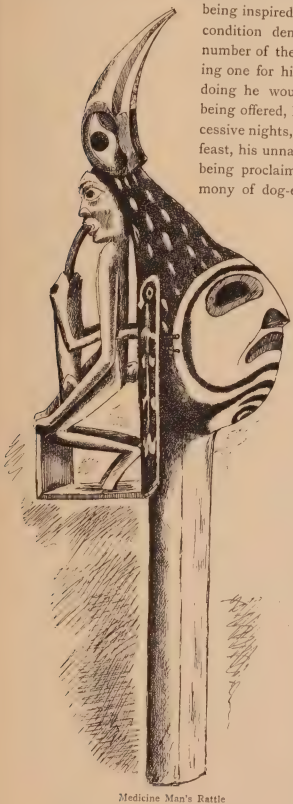
One night we heard in the next hut to that in which we were staying, when in the village, a constant singing, kept up hour after hour, occasionally broken by a distressed groan as of exhaustion, on enquiring, we found it to proceed from an old blind Indian, who had been told by the medicine man that his ailment was occasioned by a song having got into his eyes (all complaints are attributed to the presence of an intruding song or spirit), and that in order to regain his sight, it was necessary for him to sing out the intruding song, so this poor old dolt was nightly and daily singing himself into his grave, from the necessary strain on his feeble constitution, in the

vain endeavour by such means to cure his malady. The dead of winter, when little or no hunting can be done, is passed by the Indians in one continual feast, either at the adjacent villages, or in their own. On the occasion of the raising of a chief's pole, a feast is absolutely essential, otherwise I doubt the possibility of sufficient hands being forthcoming to erect so gigantic a structure, the chief who gives a feast, has saved up for perhaps ten years to provide for the occasion, it being necessary to show his superiority by destroying and giving away a considerable amount of property, usually blankets, though he will occasionally show his enormous wealth by recklessly smashing new rifles across his pole with apparent unconcern. The result of this wanton destruction leaves him for several years one of the poorest inhabitants of his village, though the proud possessor of a pole, with the crest of his tribe fantastically carved and painted upon it, and the number of rifles destroyed drawn on a board and suspended as a memento of the past folly of an Indian millionaire.

During the winter it is no very unusual circumstance to see an Indian seized with a fit, occasioned from over eating, they think nothing of it unless it be that they acquire a feeling of pride in having eclipsed their fellows in making beasts of themselves. As the result of sending out messengers to proclaim a feast, hundreds of guests pour in, nor do they get rid of these again until everything is consumed, even then they are frequently driven to freeze them out, by providing no firewood. A favorite dish among them is composed of a quantity of flour and treacle, mixed up in the bottom of the nearest canoe, regardless of the amount of filth it may contain in the form of putrid remnants of fish, etc. When the compound is considered sufficiently mixed, the chief runs his hands through the mess, and should it meet with his approval they all set to work to fill themselves, while barefooted children are frequently running through it, this concoction is more essentially a coast Indian dish, though a similar one of berries mixed into a froth is partaken of in the same fashion by the interior Indians, except that when the mouth is filled with the froth, after being retained for a few seconds it is blown gently out, until it hangs down the chin like a long red tongue, when it is sucked up again and swallowed, apparently affording intense satisfaction; the comical appearance of several Indians squatting round a canoe during this performance can be readily imagined.

CHAPTER XII.

ON one occasion we were awoke in the middle of the night by the chief's son, who had been hunting with me only few days previously, but was now by way of being inspired or mad, he rushed wildly about in a naked condition demanding a dog to eat; considering the number of them about, what was to prevent his procuring one for himself we failed to imagine, unless by so doing he would have dispelled the illusion, for none being offered, he continued his yellings on several successive nights, but a month or so later, during the great feast, his unnatural desire was gratified in due form. It being proclaimed throughout the village that the ceremony of dog-eating would take place on the morrow, gave those who cared to witness such a sight the opportunity of so doing. Soon after daybreak five medicine men in full dress appeared wandering through the snow, apparently in search of something. Presently a stark naked form presented itself, blue with the cold, and after grovelling in the snow on all fours, it came bounding towards the men, and seizing from one the dead dog carried by him, he, for it was the chief's son, immediately tore out the intestines with his teeth, savagely worrying the animal, until his chest and face were covered with gore, presenting a ghastly spectacle. I am unable to say if he actually swallowed any portion, or simply tore the animal in pieces. To my mind, by far the most marvellous part of the performance was the fact of this perfectly naked man having existed throughout the night in the deep snow, though, as it happened, there were only 10 degrees of frost on that particular occasion. After considerable enquiry, I ascertained for certain that he had been wandering about since two o'clock in the morning. I was informed that after this performance he was entitled to the rank of a medicine man, and I know for certain that he caught a severe cold. That

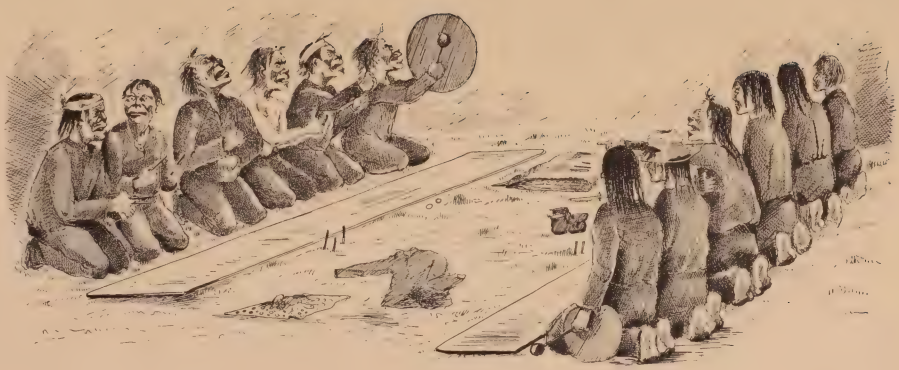


Medicine Man's Rattle

Indians have an extraordinary power of endurance had been apparent to me on several previous occasions. A woman about this period went through much the same ordeal, except that she wore stockings and moccasins, though they are not naturally modest. After wandering through the snow the greater part of the night, she shortly after daybreak arrayed herself in fancy costume, and entered several huts, breaking with a club every accessible article of value, on the understanding that for all damaged goods she should pay double their worth. This escapade likewise entitled her to some coveted position, I know not what. In one respect an Indian is placed at a considerable disadvantage to mankind in general, by no possibility can he swear in his native tongue, by what equivalent means he relieves his pent up feelings I cannot say, though a sound British oath I have found to be the only English one or two were capable of uttering; it is always a grim satisfaction to me to know that one consolation at least is denied to this undeserving creation, whose natural life is one of uninterrupted happiness, unbroken by a single care, for I believe in his true state, trouble of any sort is or rather was unknown to him, he needs but food, to obtain which in abundance necessitates little exertion; love does not exist in him, therefore the death of others causes no pain; death itself should have no terrors, for he doubts not his future happiness. But with the advent of the white man, be he trader, miner, or missionary, his peace of mind terminates and troubles rapidly accumulate: were he some handsome animal, laws for his successful preservation would probably be passed, but possessing neither beauty nor utility, and being when opposed to civilisation an undoubted encumbrance, he must inevitably disappear, after becoming a burden to himself and to the world in general. Strange it seems that the blessing civilisation usually confers on us should prove little short of a curse to the Indian, yet such appears to be the case; nor does the fact of his being human, offer him the least advantage, but very much the reverse. The wild beast, therefore, will ultimately survive the Indian.

Ancient Stone Adze.

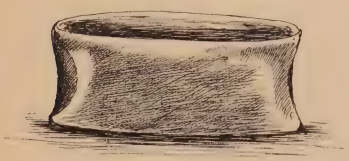
Indians of the present day are great gamblers, frequently gaming all day long, and far into the night, accompanying their play with a deafening din. Their game is one of chance, though they imagine considerable skill necessary in playing it. They proceed thus: always the bearers of one crest contend against those of another, either their own tribe or otherwise; the game commences by two or three taking up a position, out of doors if fine, with a long board, and species of tambourine, finally others come flocking round, having been summoned by hammering on the board with sticks, and beating on the tamborine; the opposing side (there are usually from six to ten on a side) provide another board and tambourine, and seating themselves opposite their opponents, the staking commences, one stakes a blanket, someone on the other side covers it with something acknowledged to be of equal value, another pulls off his shirt, throwing it into the centre, an opponent relieving himself of his boots covers it, and so on, until all



who desire to stake have done so; then whichever side has the lead commences hammering on the board, banging the tambourine, and howling a discordant chant, jerking up and down on their haunches in a most violent manner, while the player for the time being, juggles with two or four bones in his hands, exerting himself to the utmost while changing them from one hand to the other; the object is now for the opposite side to guess in which hand the marked bone is; one at a time being selected for this purpose, who after some six minutes mature consideration, makes his selection by a sign, should he guess right, for it is pure guess work, his side receives the bones and gains one or two sticks, each side having been previously provided with six of these as markers. Those who lost, now cease their clamour, which is taken up by their opponents in another tune, and the struggle noisily continues; lasting sometimes for two or even more days, before being decided; indeed, I never saw the termination of a game, though I have frequently watched until one side had lost all their sticks, when they appeared to commence over again. Slow though this entertainment appears to be, some manage to lose everything they possess; a miner told me that he had seen an Indian after losing every article upon him, hurry off to fetch his wife's clothes, after these had followed the rest of his goods, he finally staked his wife, with what result my informant was unaware; they have been known, as a last resource, to stake themselves as slaves; in any case, through the game many are reduced to abject distress. The hideous and incessant noise being enough to madden them into the bargain, while the prolonged exertion causes the perspiration to stream from their faces, their hands become so moist as to necessitate their constantly clawing up the earth, in order to retain the bones.

Among the Timsians I saw but two fairly good-looking male Indians, but of the Giatikshans those who were not plain were repulsively ugly, with high cheek-bones, broad faces, and squat noses, huge heavily-lipped mouths, and coarse, straight, black hair, their faces being frequently rendered more hideous by fantastic devices painted in red and black stripes and spots, though to do them justice they appeared far superior artists to the women, who were invariably satisfied by placing daubs of red indiscriminately over their features, occasionally varying the monotony with black. I have frequently seen a woman's face completely covered as though with tar, with vermilion round and over the eyes, and the same colour down her parting, and for an inch over the forehead. When in mourning the latter smear themselves with a mixture of charred wood and oil, bestowing a like adornment on their children, whose faces in times of joy are completely covered with red paint. The loss of a child or relation is always a serious matter to an Indian, causing a melancholy appearance which I used to mistake for grief, until I discovered it to be occasioned by the necessity of providing a feast to the memory of the departed, in obedience to Indian etiquette. They have an extraordinary partiality for medicines, their favourite being castor-oil, which they purchase in large quantities, consuming at one time sufficient to kill any ordinary mortal. It is always a dangerous and thankless experiment to doctor them. Should one die from any cause whatever while under your treatment you find yourself, according to their laws, responsible for the death, and under the necessity of paying the family handsomely for the loss of one whose great value they only discover on such an occasion. They much relish any description of grease, particularly the oil procured from that most remarkable little fish the Oulachon, which is the most filthy and horrible-smelling extraction I

have ever come across. They mix their berries, and, in fact, all food with it, and have usually a large supply by them. These fish are captured in inconceivable quantities on the Naas in the spring. The Giatikshan women are treated with more equality than is the case with the Plains Indians. True, if there is but one pack between man and woman she will have to carry it, and if there be two hers will be by far the heavier. One hundred pounds is the usual weight, though this is occasionally considerably exceeded. They have also plenty of work to do in the berry season, nevertheless the women generally have their say, in some cases domineering over their weaker half. It is no unusual circumstance to hear an Indian state that, before accepting your offer for a certain article, he will consult his wife, though his probable object in so doing is to gain time in order to ascertain if he can get no higher price elsewhere; but I have seen a woman stoutly decline to allow her husband to part with a canoe he had already sold to me, finally forcing him to repudiate the bargain. The women's special province appears to be to prepare and take care of the dried fish and berries for the winter's use. The former have to be packed a considerable distance from the store, for if kept in the village it has to be stored in little houses elevated some fourteen feet from the ground, as a protection from the starving dogs. Long and unsuccessfully did I seek the beautiful Indian maiden of the novels, but, alas, all I discovered were ever cast in the same mould—large, heavy, coarse faces, usually undistinguishable from the men's—massive bodies, the same size all the way down, except at the waist, which probably exceeded in bulk all other portions of the frame, and feet turned in like gorillas. I once saw what I believe to have been a thoroughbred Indian with fair hair, she was standing with another, both in the garb of nature, craning round a rock intently gazing at our canoe as it was being hauled over some rapids. Having landed in order to stretch my legs, I came suddenly on these nymphs who were so interested as to allow me to approach unperceived to within two yards when, with a yell they separated and fled. I doubt if it was modesty which caused their retreat, they were both aged, and had their painting been exhibited in the Royal Academy, the British matron would for once have had just cause for indignation. Many of the women adorn the lower lip with a piece of bone or mother of pearl, a pin being first inserted which is in time replaced by either of the previously mentioned articles, the whole being gradually enlarged according to her rank or age until it becomes capable of holding an ornament the size of the sketch. In this condition the lip sticks straight out, except with old women when it hangs on the chin, presenting a repulsive appearance when, usually for want of teeth, the whole of the inside of the mouth is exposed to view.



Labrette, or Lip Ornament.

This fashion appeared more prevalent among the Timsians than the Giatikshans, the former wearing far larger ornaments. During the winter a popular amusement with the Indian consisted in playing at soldiers, they had somehow procured a few old uniforms in which they stalked about, the principal feature being an old dead woman, who, stiff with the

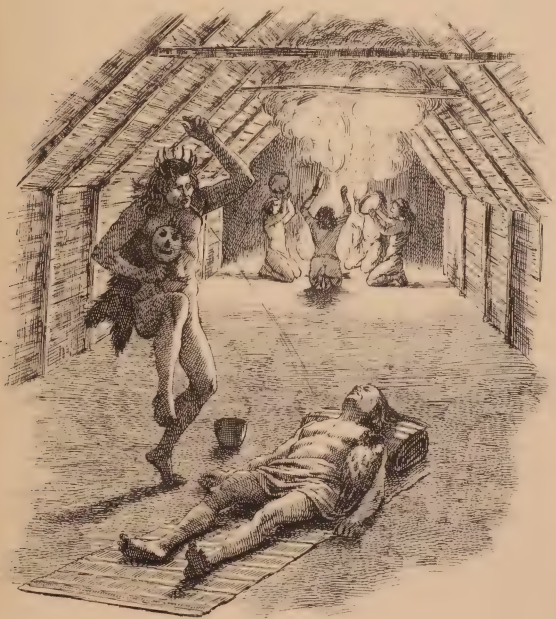
frost, they brought on to parade supported on sticks in which fashion she headed the procession as it wended its way through the village, but after six weeks wear and tear, the weather having broken up she began to give out, and being of no further service, was taken away and burned. The chief also held an important post on these occasions, he was a miserable specimen of partially animated humanity, rejoicing in the name of Kittymondor, and usually spent his time wandering aimlessly about, with broad silver rings through his nose and ears. When he occasionally came to call on us he appeared perfectly content if allowed to put his head in the fire and look up the chimney.

Indian woman with labrette.

When on the coast our crew used frequently to make us feel most uncomfortable; if one wanted anything he would stroll up to the fire and remain steadfastly staring at us, when finally after shifting from one leg to the other for at least ten minutes he would ask for the loan of the frying pan. We soon became accustomed to this almost universal habit, and always correctly judging that when one of the race put in an appearance it was that he required something, therefore met him half way with "what do you want?" this we found saved a most uncomfortable suspense. We also proved the importance of never giving anything to them unless in exchange or in payment for some service. After receiving one present they were certain to pester us for more, besides which, each of the relations will probably demand as a right an equivalent to that which you have, in your ignorance of their grasping natures, been generous enough to give to their comrade; even if while camping you have any food you do not want, it is usually best to throw it away, or on the next occasion they will cooly demand any little delicacy you thought fit to bestow on them before. Should a chief do you the doubtful honor of calling to pay his respects, it is well to bear in mind that etiquette forbids him to leave until you say go, otherwise you may find yourself placed in the wearisome position of a friend of mine on whom a mighty chief called, these two being unable to speak the other's language, sat staring and occasionally smiling or nodding at one another for over an hour, the one longing for his *congé* the other equally anxious to be rid of so wearisome a visitor. Somehow, to say go seems so utterly at variance with one's natural feelings that I have ever found such a form of amicable dismissal to stick in my throat. If you are living in a hut let it be understood that on no pretence will an Indian be allowed to enter, or if you desire to purchase anything, restrict them to the kitchen or any room you do not frequent, otherwise they will burst in whenever they please to remain squatting for hours before the fire, never losing an opportunity of stealing any little article that may be lying about; nor for this reason, in the event of their having gained admittance, should they ever be left alone. Never permit them in your tent under any circumstances, if they do not seize the opportunity to relieve you of something from the general medley usually existing in so small a compass, they will squat on your bed clothes in all probability leaving behind certain of their parasites most repugnant to a civilised mortal.

CHAPTER XIII.

I HAVE observed five modes of disposing of their dead among Indians. In the Rocky Mountains, a corpse may occasionally be found in the branches of a tree, lying on a framework of boughs. I once discovered there, under a shelving rock, a few old bones; and as bones, especially when human, have a considerable interest for me, always promising an addition to my collection of skulls, I returned to camp to obtain a spade, with which I turned up the loose rocks and earth around the spot.



All the bones found, must, I think, have belonged to some animal; but I was, to a certain extent rewarded by the discovery of a buffalo robe, pieces of hide, poles, and a pair of snowshoes, all in a more or less decomposed state. The appearance of the spot was not that of a *cache*. I therefore conclude that the luckless owner must have met with some fatal mishap, which necessitated the desertion of his outfit.

Along the Pacific coast, not far from Victoria, were to be seen some small islands, where the Indians were formerly in the habit of disposing of their dead by the simple process of depositing them on the bare rock or ground. A common practice among the coast Indians is to place their dead in canoes, but about Metlakahtla the ordinary civilised burial is enforced. For about 200 miles up the Skeena, as far as Kishpyox, which was the limit of my travels in that direction, I observed that, with rare exceptions a species of cremation was resorted to; the bodies being placed on a pile of logs are consumed until all is reduced to ashes. These are enclosed by wooden palings, or placed in a box, or else in a contrivance resembling a dog-kennel. The hat, coat, and various other articles formerly belonging to the dead man being hung up within the palings presumably for future use. In the case of a baby, the cradle was frequently deposited on the ashes. Most grotesquely carved poles were also erected. One, I noticed, on the banks of the Skeena, was about thirty feet high, surmounted by a carved head and body in representation of the proprietor of the six feet of earth below, with a pipe in his mouth, wearing an old cloth coat and tall hat, with a decidedly rakish appearance. Such exhibitions never seem to strike an Indian as being in any way ridiculous, possibly his sense in that respect is not over keen. The almost constant rattling, singing and tambourine beating of the medicine men used to prove most monotonous to us, causing us to feel a positive relief, when, by spouting water from their mouths, placing owls on their chests, and practising various other tomfooleries, they finally hastened the death of the already dying victim. Medicine men receive considerable pay for the administration of their arts, which if they ever effected a cure would, I fancy, be traceable to ignorantly applied mesmerism.

I think when selecting Indians to accompany me on a trip I should avoid those calling themselves Christians, they are undoubtedly more apt at deceit, simply utilising their knowledge of Christianity as a blind, in order to the more easily rob or otherwise annoy one. Except in very rare instances no reliance should be placed on any Indian, he will as readily as not desert you at the most critical moment, though by so doing he places you in the utmost peril; therefore, if possible, take the advice of some white man on the spot in making a selection, or you may find yourself placed in the most awkward and risky position, not knowing which way to turn, with every prospect of eventually starving in some unknown locality. I have always found that when an Indian desires to sell anything he cannot be induced to state a price, fearing lest he should ask a smaller sum than you are prepared to give, neither will any offer you make be considered enough. The most trivial trading with these Skeena Indians usually occupied me from one to twenty-four hours before my terms would be accepted, during which interval they would go away some three or four times, always returning with a newly invented lie. When having finally assured themselves that no higher price could be obtained elsewhere they would accept my offer. To be discovered in a falsehood affects them in no manner, indeed they take little pains to avoid such an exposure; while stealing is regarded as rather a commendable accomplishment than otherwise. One member of a family thieving from the others as readily as from a stranger. It is with them as with certain of our civilised vices—the only wrong seems to be getting found out. I feel that the reader will be asking himself what all this Indian nonsense has to do with hunting? But my principal object in thus lengthily exposing some of their frauds is

to so convey a correct impression of their character as to place those coming in contact with them hereafter thoroughly on their guard, thereby benefiting them by the dearly purchased experience of one whose whole autumn, winter, and spring hunting for one year was ruined at their hands (not to mention minor annoyances). In fact there was little hunting to recount for the winter of 1886, the blank therefore being filled with such general information as is deemed of probable assistance to future sportsmen. The year 1886 faded away to the very end without the addition of a single trophy since reaching the Forks. I had been out several times after caribou, which, naturally a timid and suspicious animal, had from being constantly hunted become so keenly on the alert as to render fair stalking almost impossible, though I should have had two chances had not the possibility of a shot been barred by my Indian hunters, a different one on each occasion, but worthless in the first instance and worse in the second. After trying a third trip into the mountains I determined that no Indian should again accompany me, therefore with Fred's assistance we conveyed a few blankets and cooking utensils a day's journey up an adjacent mountain, and there *cached* them in the snow; but we soon found such doubtful sport as existed hardly worth the undeniable discomfort we suffered during windy nights, three parts of the way up a mountain with the thermometer ever below zero, our only shelter being a few airy fir boughs. We had but one consolation in being there, namely, that no Indian had cared to follow us to our camping place though some had made an effort to do so, but had found the risk of freezing, by not getting back the same day, too great to be chanced; we therefore had this mountain to ourselves. One day, while returning to camp, after unsuccessfully endeavouring to obtain a shot at a band of caribou, I perceived an eagle in the distance. Not having previously noticed one in the neighbourhood of the Forks, I stood still the better to observe it. The ground was at this period covered with about six inches of snow, except on the summit of the mountain, where it was considerably deeper, therefore as I stood I should have been a conspicuous object. Presently I was surprised to notice how unusually close the bird was approaching, but concluded it must have mistaken me for a stump, and would immediately discover the mistake; it never however deviated from its course, nor changed its position, except to hang its legs slightly when about ten yards distant, and in a line with my head; these it quickly gathered up, again flying directly at my face, which so took me by surprise as to leave me bare time to hold up my rifle as a guard, and wave my left hand about; this caused it to pass a yard above me with the rush of half a dozen rockets. Up to this time, the idea of harming the bird had never entered my mind, but its most unwarrantable assult filled me with a sudden feeling of resentment, causing me to face about and fire at the retreating foe, when, with a rapid wheel, it turned to renew the attack, making this time an undoubtedly intentional swoop at my head, in which it would have been successful, had I not suddenly ducked. I fired again, the bullet cutting away a few small feathers; whether the bird was seriously wounded or had merely sustained the loss of a little down I could not tell, anyway it had had enough of so unequal a match, and sailed slowly away on straightened pinions, gradually sinking into the clouds below, from which I am inclined to believe that it was hard hit; had it not been for the second attack, I should have supposed that this bird merely mistook me for the stump of an old tree, whereon it had intended to perch, and should therefore have thought no more of the circumstance; but I can only conclude

Diversion on a Mountain Trail.

from the second decided attempt after having been fired at, that it was bent on mischief, though I have never heard of a similar performance on the part of an Eagle. It was not the common white headed Eagle, but I afterwards learned that another species exists, called the Mountain or Golden Eagle, which I conclude is identical with my assailant which was a brown bird, with a light triangle, the sides of which were about three inches in length, situated in the centre of the wing, and visible from underneath, that being the only close position in which I could observe the bird.

Impertinent little birds, something of the jay species, appeared numerous in the mountains. They used to be called meat birds in the rockies, and appeared here, where they are known as Whiskey Jacks, as fearless and pugnacious as their distant relations of former acquaintance. I one day watched one in the Rockies stealing the winter supply of fir cones from a squirrel's store, the enraged animal chasing and endeavouring to catch the bird whilst driving it from tree to tree. Happening to pass the same spot a few days later I again found these two still at war and fear, failing to secure the robber the squirrel must have fared badly during the hard weather. Here I observed first one and then five of these little torments worrying a meek looking Owl, engaged in trying to snatch a wink of sleep during the day, while perched on a dead tree, but all efforts to secure a peaceful slumber proved fruitless, therefore after making a few mild and futile darts at its enemies it flapped wearily away followed by the whole gang. When there is meat in camp these merry little chatterers become quite tame and fearless, constantly approaching to within two yards of you in order to steal a tempting piece of fat, they keep up a constant and varied chattering and whistling, and might I fancy be taught to talk well. Dirtier little beasts I never saw; on shooting one for preservation, I found it covered from throat to tail, with a thick coating of turpentine which rendered it useless, the breast feathers being completely matted together. Their plumage is of an unusually fluffy nature composed entirely of various shades of grey, and in shape they resemble our jay, but are very much smaller.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CIRCUMSTANCE which used to strike me as doubtful, I have from further experience little hesitation in asserting as a fact, namely, that a mortally wounded animal is frequently to all appearance unaffected by later shots, such as would have either knocked it down or caused a serious shock in the event of its having been previously uninjured, unless one of these later shots strike the brain or heart, though in the latter case death is not necessarily instantaneous, the nature of the wound calculated to so paralyze the nerves as to render further bullets ineffectual in producing the ordinary perceptible shock, or, as far as can be seen, aiding in hastening the death of the already dying animal, I am unable definitely to describe, owing to the great difficulty of correctly locating each successive bullet, but I do not think it restricted to one particular spot. Into an animal thus mortally wounded by the first barrel I have placed one bullet after another, any one of which would ordinarily have stopped him, without even perceiving the object to flinch. Doubtless all sportsmen have noticed the difficulty in effectually shooting dead a hare which has been previously so wounded as to appear in a dazed condition, I have on more occasions than one fired two barrels into one in such a state with no apparent result, and though they eventually roll over, it would be impossible to determine which shot terminated their existence, unless the last should have penetrated the brain, which I have found is invariably fatal, with a bullet, though with shot there may he an occasional exception. A hare too appears unusually tenacious of life under certain circumstances when compared with other animals of the same class. How frequently we have found one (the supposed missing of which has caused a general titter to pass down the line much to the shooter's disgust) lying dead on the further side of the bank some hundred or so yards away. Every person present if asked previous to the discovery would have asserted that the animal was uninjured. But hares are by no means the only small game affected as I have described. I have frequently noticed rabbits and birds of many

Old Indian Stone Dagger.

sorts thus similarly paralized. I regret being unable to offer a suggestion as to the exact part of the body which when injured produces so peculiar an insensibility, though doubtless a medical man would instantly solve the difficulty, but my intention is to discover from personal experience (a by no means easy matter) the direction the bullet did take on an actual occasion when this peculiar condition was manifest.

Next to the salmon of British Columbia the grouse of North America in general present such a series of difficulties in their classification, that, being without a book of reference, I gave up all idea of ever distinguishing them by their correct names. I have come across, I believe, no less than fourteen species, including ptarmigan, but as no two works on the subject appear to agree, and my opportunities for consulting any reliable authority being extremely limited, I was unable to discover the correct appelation of more than three or four varieties, the same bird in one part of America receiving a totally different name in another. In Virginia the ruffed grouse is termed pheasant, and in British Columbia, chicken. Three species appeared common there: the ruffed grouse, dusky grouse (known as fool-hen), and a much larger description, found in the mountains, locally described as blue grouse; also two, possibly three, kinds of ptarmigan, though how to correctly call them I cannot say.

If the reader has any love for nature, he will not grudge the few minutes spent in perusing a short account of what I saw while seated for an hour on the brink of a tiny lake near the Skeena Forks. 'Twas a glorious morning, early in May. As I crossed the mossy swamp which bounded the heavily-timbered banks of this miniature lake, my first greeting was fron a snipe—the only one I had encountered since leaving the coast—which, swiftly rising with a cry of alarm, was instantly lost to view. The little pools where the sun had not yet penetrated were still covered with a thin film of ice, the cold breeze ever reminding one of the severity of the past winter, even yet vividly apparent on the snow-clad mountains, stirred the straggling willows; all else whispered of spring. The air, the earth, and even the water teemed with animal life; all appeared opening into a fresh creation. Joyful songs filled the air; small frogs, perched on overhanging twigs, competed merrily with the birds, regardless of their inequality of voice. Delicately pencilled fly-catchers appeared to have arrived with the morning sun, the genial rays from which were momentarily bringing forth innumerable aerial insects for their pleasure. Countless butterflies having lain dormant for months, snugly secreted in some cosy crevice, now sailed around, indicating in many instances that, unlike the birds, they were still arrayed in their last summer's plumage, the ragged appearance of which bore witness to former perils long since forgotten. A sudden ring, rapidly enlarging on the glassy water, revealed the presence of an aquatic beetle, which, being unable to resist the temptation to inhale a breath of morning air, had risen to the surface, and having satisfied itself, again descended, disturbing in its course a homely shrimp, which, clasping her infant firmly in her arms, glided swiftly to some more tranquil spot better suited to her domestic duties. Loud rappings on dead trees I heard, which, vibrating noisily, would, had they been produced by the hand of man, have silenced every other sound; but the busy woodpecker startled nothing, save the insects they sought, any more than did the handsome nothern diver as he floated proudly in the centre of the lake, while uttering his loud, uncanny laugh. Busy pirouetting teal darted courteously round their mates, while little plump, pied ducks dived merrily about. Grebes,

too, had sought this sunny spot, seeming quite repaid for so long and tedious a flight with disproportioned wings. The well-known mallard also swam in company with pintail, widgeon, and other wild fowl, rare and prized in far off climes. And, while I gazed, three canvas-backs came whizzing over head, and noisily splashed down, not fifty yards from where I sat. I watched the little mice as they nimbly darted from fallen leaf to leaf, revealing but a glimpse of their brown coats and beady eyes, ere they were again concealed. But something larger soon approached with proudly lifted tail, the long hair standing out on either side as though a plume. How tame and fearless, and, when alive, how comely this animal appeared with its glossy black coat slashed with white. How still I kept, I scarcely dared to breathe, for well I knew, that if alarmed, it could in one instant render me and all this beauty unbearable within a mile, and unapproachable for weeks; and skunks seemingly well know their power or they would never be so bold.

All at once I seemed, though innocently enough, to have aroused to the highest pitch of wrath a pert old squirrel, that came clattering down a pine trunk, on the top of which he had been peacefully munching cones, and throwing what he did not want at me, but now he fairly shook with rage, barking and jerking from side to side, until I began to fear that perhaps I was sitting on his winter store. At length, having approached quite close, his pent up fury burst in one long rattle sounding much like clock work suddenly run down; thus evidently relieved, he scampered off to join his mate, who, with her mouth full of cedar bark, was busily engaged constructing a summer house where snugly they could lie. Scarcely had the squirrel disappeared, when a northern diver, usually so shy and wary, came gliding up to within thirty yards; save that he swam low, all customary caution appeared neglected. Soon he dived, and immediately after, with a terrified effort at escape, a wounded teal was dragged beneath the surface, which, when it reappeared, was hotly pressed by this northern tyrant, when, had it not been for my timely interference, a savage blow from his cruel beak would have quickly terminated its existence, but, as this was for me a day of peace, I felt no disposition to watch others enjoying sport. But what odd sound was that, which baffles all description, resembling much, though more prolonged, a football dashed with force upon a wooden floor and left rebounding. Soon, by peering stealthily about, I saw a grouse perched boldly on a fallen tree, and while I watched he raised his head, and almost standing on his toes, commenced to slowly flap his outstretched wings, each flap produced a thudding noise. The pace then gradually increased and finished in a blurr. I now crept close, but was soon perceived, when straightway stiffening out, with neck upstretched, and head awry and body much compressed, he at once assumed more the appearance of a gnarled spike than bird, and would have been passed a dozen times without detection. Why I have often thought do ruffed grouse thus drum; if as a challenge, it is never heeded; if it is a form of courtship, where's the mate? I see but one remaining reason, and that the same which causes a solitary peacock to spread his tail and strut about. Leaving the proud bird upon his log, I returned again to my former place. A few mosquitoes, too weak to sting, hummed noisily around. And then an object caught my eye, wrapped in a dirty blanket, and skulking along the lake evidently bent on stalking a bunch of ducks, which sat between us. I rose to leave, for tranquility and peace no longer reigned, while a dose of shot or even iron rivets would likely have been my portion had I remained. Truly I had passed a pleasant

morning; one such as Waterton, judging from his charmingly narrated wanderings, would have thoroughly enjoyed and made the most of, could he have but taken my position for an hour, though, being long since dead, his enemies, the closet naturalists, have now full sway, re-writing old and fabulous details, increased by fresh ones gathered from hearsay.

THE INDIAN OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER XV.

I SHOULD imagine that subscribers to the Church Missionary Society would have had their eyes considerably opened could they have shared our eight months' observations in the largest Indian village on the Skeena, known as Hazeltown, where the present mission was started in 1880, and has since that date been represented by four different missionaries, exclusive of Bishop Ridley himself, the amount of funds expended must have been considerable, I should say enormous, but the result is the supposed reclamation of two professed christians, one of whom is in the pay of the society, which boasts of about twelve conversions or baptisms, but as several of these live a married life declining to conform to the usual ceremony, and are in other respects little removed from their original condition, I think they may be dispensed

with under the head of conversions, thus leaving as the result of seven years' labour under five missionaries two professed Christian Indians, the society must I should say feel proud of Hazeltown. But can they conscientiously claim anything superior at any of their other stations around, unless it be a few deserters from Mr. Duncan at Metlakahtla? And by what means do the glowing accounts of which we read concerning the mission work in this quarter reach England, and by whom are they so artistically coloured as to cause a blush of righteous indignation to those chance readers who are acquainted with the honest truth? It was deplorable to find a conscientious and honourable man placed in so perfectly helpless and hopeless a position as was the missionary at Hazeltown during the time of our visit there, and I know how thoroughly he realised the impracticability of his task. Undoubtedly the system of mission work is here, as on the coast, worse than faulty, it is wrong from beginning to end and inconceivably narrow minded. I should very much like to hear truthfully answered the question usually put to the superintendent of police in a court of justice as to what is known of the prisoner, if applied to the past of a large majority of missionaries, some surprising revelations, and those none too creditable would I fear be the result. How and by what means a certain class of men are selected as fitting subjects to establish the word of God, surpasses comprehension as also does the selection of magistrates for British Columbia. Let us take the best of the missionaries first. These are what I should term the over zealous, probably their intentions and actions are sincere, but none the less worthless when brought to bear on an Indian. An example came under my direct observation where one of these misguided individuals returning from a certain expedition, boasted with unblushing effrontery, that he had married during his absence every person whose immoral life gave a pretext for the ceremony, it seemed to me by his own showing, that in every instance he had acted illegally, and that strictly speaking none were married at all. This man also practised a piece of cruel tyranny on the widow of a white man at Hazeltown, who was struggling to support her family by trading furs, he compelled her with more might than right to pull down and remove her new and hardly completed house, the situation of which did not concur with the bishop's views. The magistrate of the district afterwards imformed me that this act of oppression was perfectly illegal, and should not have been perpetrated had he been there. Others of this class commence by forcing the profoundest mysteries of their religion upon Indians unable as yet to distinguish the right hand from the left, thereby irrevocably mystifying them at the first onset. Such a man as this must have been he who informed me that nothing could be done for the welfare of an Indian, without the early administration of the sacrament. If the condition of the Indians ever is improved, it certainly will not be by such men as these, zealous though they may be. The next class comprises men who if they answered truthfully your query as to why they sought their present occupation, would reply that they found it most suited to their qualifications, and that they could obtain no better pay elsewhere; while some have drifted into their present unenviable position purely through the misrepresentations of the society or its servants; these work for their wages conscientiously enough in a hum-drum manner, they do no harm, and a similar amount of good, eventually leaving the Indians in precisely the same frame of mind as when they came among them. The third class not being readily detected are possibly more numerous than is generally supposed, it consists of

scoundrels prepared for any villainy, whose main object is to fill their pockets as quickly and peaceably as possible, at the same time gratifying their ruling passions to the fullest extent under religion's extensive covering. The injury caused by such men reflects principally on their white brethren. I doubt if even their blackness could add a shade to the Indian's already sombre hue. Such as come under these three classes seem to be the men usually selected by the Church Missionary Society as fitting subjects to administer the Gospel of Christ and convert the heathen of British Columbia. It is, therefore, scarcely surprising that those who procured such tools to work with should expose further their incompetence by a lamentable exhibition of ignorance as to how the work should be set about, and, indeed, they can have but a very vague idea of the nature and difficulties of the undertaking itself. Just so long as such ignorance is relied on, and their deliberately false statements of progress believed in by those who subscribe to the Church Missionary Society so long will the Indian cling to his present state of existence, while the purses of worthless men reap the only advantage. Surely those who have studied the progress, or I should say the want of it, not from the reports sent to England, but from actual observation, cannot deny that there must be some gigantic flaw in the present process of missionary work, else why this state of stagnation. Christianity makes no advance. It never has, and never will, except under Mr. Duncan, or until his method is adopted, therefore let those who are sincere in their good intentions towards the Indians of British Columbia select as their instrument a plain honest common-sense christian man, devoid of fashionable cant and hypocrisy, let him instal himself among the Indians in some locality free from white men, administering first to their bodily welfare, and by degrees as opportunity offers, let him gradually separate them from their natural habits and vices, using such means as his experience will suggest, at the same time providing remunerative work for them. It will undoubtedly be a slow and tedious process, but by no means so slow as the ordinary mission work, through the direct agency of which I have been unable to trace any good results. Having reduced the tribe into a fairly law abiding and civilised community; for civilisation, though hitherto ignored by the missionary, must be the primary object, let the operator bring all his force to bear upon the children with as much external aid as necessary. It is with them he has now to deal, no amount of religious teaching will have any effect on the old people; it is the rising generation which must be separated from their parents and taught. Such a community would in a few years contain more useful and christianised Indians, than all the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society will ever collect among the lot of them, for such a mode of procedure is utterly at variance with their orthodox routine of preach, preach from start to finish. They have ever been perfectly content to commence in the middle, exhorting the Indians in more or less unintelligible jargon to join a new God or be for ever damned. Small wonder if, failing to understand the advantage of this sudden change, they decline to believe. Men of learning with every facility at hand have been found unable to grasp such teachings, yet these savages from the depths of oblivion are expected readily to perceive the necessity of such a change after listening to something too profound to be comprehensible. The Church Missionary Society's system appears to be one of instantaneous cramming, whereby they propose to hustle a crowd of mystified Indians into heaven *en masse*. The principal difficulty in the way of successfully carrying out such a plan of opperations as I have just

suggested, is the man capable of and willing to undertake so thankless and unselfish a task ; I know of but one and his hands are ever full, he has shown by Metlakahtla what can be done with Indians under a regime of christianity tempered with that common sense so conspicuously absent among the missionaries, he, too, though commencing under the Church Missionary Society found it impossible to carry out a successful work under their auspices, and therefore launching forth on his own account he brought Metlakahtla to its present unparallelled state of christianity, discipline and utility.*

CHAPTER XVI.

IN March, a free trader (all others than the Hudson Bay Company are termed free traders), coming to the Forks on business, assured me that I stood a very good chance of finding caribou near the Indian village of Kityeyukla, from whence he could procure me Indians, I therefore determined to make a final effort, though I was very doubtful whether at so late a period, the caribou had not shed their antlers, for I could obtain no definite information from the Indians as to when they shed them, they never appeared to know anything more about an animal than where or when to find it, however, taking Fred and an Indian to pack, we started off a day's journey down the river, and on the following day set out for the most likely mountain in company with a couple of Indians. The entire day was occupied in reaching the summit, for when about half way up we found ourselves in some four inches of freshly fallen snow. I never remember being so thoroughly fagged as on that occasion. When finally I could scarcely drag one snow-shoe after the other, I was forced to give the word to camp. It was already getting dark, and we had been steadily plodding on for ten hours against the collar, yet one of the Indians who kept close upon my heels, carried a pack of 70 lbs., and appeared perfectly prepared to walk for the remainder of the night if need be. Quickly selecting a spot against a bank where the snow was not more than four feet in depth, we scraped a hole and lit the fire, erecting our solitary canoe sail to windward. It shortly commenced to snow, and continued doing so steadily throughout the night, during which period, the heat having undermined the snow whereon we lay, we had all, one by one, slipped into the fire, or what remained of it. In the morning snow still fell, showing no signs of abating. Feeling utterly unable in so much fresh snow to climb the adjacent and higher mountain to which all the tracks we had passed appeared to lead, I decided once more to return empty handed to the Forks, nor was it without a certain grim

* Metlakahtla is now no more. In 1887 the Indians' friend, a noble, true, and honourable man, was forced to seek in American territory that peace and justice denied him by his countrymen. Mr. Duncan has removed with his followers to Alaska, there to recommence his good works, leaving Old Metlakahtla, with its refuse, in the hands of a narrow-minded and envious society, whose reports doubtless teem with the results of their imaginary conversions of those worthless ones who preferred their dollars to their leader. A proud day it must have been for the bishop when he became the ruler of forsaken Metlakahtla, where he stood in the cast-off shoes of a great man and annexed the deserted town to the glory of the society.

satisfaction, that I beheld it snow unceasingly for the next two days, when I had reason to congratulate myself on being well out of it. It now seemed as though when all else favoured my projects, the very elements were turned against me. Clearly I should never kill a caribou in those regions, though taking the Forks as a centre, I should say that every mountain within a radius of a hundred miles held caribou or goats, the two seldom being found together in the same locality.

In April I made another excursion further down the river, to the Indian Village of Ketwangar, proposing to hunt bears there. It was a weary tramp of 25 miles over rocky boulders of all sizes, for the snow and ice had almost disappeared on the flat. Once more the Indians refused to pack for me, or to sanction my hunting in their country. Split up and mystified by the various sects of missionaries, they scarcely knew their own minds, having been taught to resent the intrusion of any stranger as one who came to steal their land, this conviction had become firmly rooted in their naturally avaricious and selfish nature, necessitating the abandonment of my final effort to hunt within a reasonable distance of the Forks. Towards the end of April, many small migratory birds commenced to arrive, Sand-martins being amongst the number. Being an unusually late spring, up to the tenth of May, save in the case of a few gooseberry bushes, no foliage whatever was visible, but with the first flowers came the humming birds. About the last week in April small Canadian geese, mallards, pintails, widgeon, teal, northern divers, grebe, and many other sorts of wild fowl, with which I was unacquainted commenced to arrive on the small lake close by, they only remained three weeks, and then sped elsewhere to breed. On this lake we had fair sport for a short period. On the 20th of May, while camped about 14 miles from the Forks, vainly searching for any stray bear that might have escaped the ever prowling Indians, I received a message from Mr. Clifford at the Hudson Bay Company's store, to say that he had secured a reliable Indian ready to accompany me to a certain cañon, where grizzly bears abounded, and where no Indians dared to hunt. The last two who ventured to do so, both falling victims to infuriated grizzlies. This being the best hunting news I had obtained for some time, I hastily returned, and on the following day set out with Kishpyox Jim, that being the name of the Indian prepared to brave the greatest of Indian horrors; but having successfully destroyed a human being, he felt brave, or as they call it, "skookum," though finally at the sight of a black bear, all his boasted courage forsook him, and he simply cowered behind, whilst using me as a shield. This Indian had saved up considerable property, possessing amongst other things, two wives, one of whom belonged to the village of Gishgegars, which gave him hunting rights there, of which rights we were about to take advantage; therefore, together with his son and three medium sized curs, we set off, two of the dogs carrying packs of 25 lbs. each; but they were in such a weak and half starved condition, that at about two o'clock

each day, one heard piteous yells in the rear, which invariably notified their inability to struggle further; kicks and blows proving ineffectual, their packs were then divided between the Indians and the third cur, which was much smaller than the others, but rejoiced in the title of a bear dog. This term being applied to any dog that will bark at, and chase a bear, but rigidly ignores all small game. All the Indian dogs struck me as being closely allied to the Coyote, some being almost pure breeds of that animal. We usually walked 10 hours a day, averaging some 15 miles over a fair trail, though our trail on this occasion was frequently of such a vague description, that unless one had been previously acquainted with it, to discover the faintest trace for considerable distances, would have been utterly impossible; however, it was considered a good trail in a country where, as the Irishman remarked, they had so much land they were forced to stack it. Each morning, instead of the smouldering embers with which one expected to start a fresh fire, three miserable dogs would be found coiled in the ashes; this method of gaining a little warmth is invariably adopted, when the weather is sufficiently mild to allow of the fire being let out during the night, with the result that scarcely an Indian dog is to be seen without a considerable portion of its hair burned off. When the time for packing arrived, no matter how frequently they were called, the miserable beasts refused to move, having to be lifted up, carried to a suitable spot, and popped down, to remain resignedly motionless whilst being lashed to their pack, for it was not a case of the pack fitting the dog, the dog had to fit the pack, and rather than make an alteration I have seen a dog lashed in the shape of a bow, in which position he has travelled all day with his own tail in full view. It is marvellous how they can exist on the meagre rations of salmon they receive daily, when at work.

On the third day after crossing a cañon by an Indian Suspension Bridge, an alarmingly frail-looking structure which rocked and bounded wildly and was only calculated to sustain one person at a time, we passed over the Babine River, and reached the village of Gishgegas, where we found many opposed to our hunting, even in the spot where they dared not venture themselves. It must not be imagined that they entertained any apprehension at the risk we might incur, on the contrary, their opposition arose solely from the dog in the manger principle: however, Jim who foresaw this difficulty, had brought several little presents of plain cakes composed of flour and water, with which rare luxuries, for flour was seldom tasted there, he won over the chief, and most important of the tribe. After hiring snow-shoes, we again took the trail, and an undeniably bad one it was, so much so, that at four o'clock all were glad to camp in view of the side of a mountain celebrated for black bears.

Scarcely had the packs been set down, when Jim who had been eagerly staring at the mountain, gasped excitedly, "Bar!"—"nike, tum-tum, bar," instantly his son followed suit, finally they saw it walk across a patch of snow on to a clear space where it remained, but, by no possible means could they make the animal visible to me. I told Jim as he was sure it was a bear, we would start for it at once, which we did, and on reaching the spot in about three-quarters-of-an-hour, discovered it to be a charred stump, which in the excited imagination of two Indians had been distinctly seen to walk across the snow. Much disgusted at having been induced to take this climb for nothing, I decided to walk along the side of the mountain on the chance of finding a veritable bear, and very soon I spied him on an open flat below,

some four hundred yards off, busily engaged eating a species of hemlock, which constitutes their principle food here in the spring. Beckoning to Jim, I pointed out the much coveted prize, and was proceeding to make him understand that I considered as we were fully exposed, the best plan would be to go round a belt of trees and surprise him from the other side; when what was my indignation to see Jim start off with the three dogs, which he had insisted on bringing, straight across the open, making for, and in full view of the bear. There was nothing for it, but to follow, and when within two hundred yards as I plainly saw that Jim intended to have the hunt to himself, I felt that being unable to get in front, I would rather have my shot and miss, than lose all chance. Therefore taking a few strides to one side, in order to get Jim out of the line of fire, with a hasty and unsteady sight I pulled the right trigger, hearing the bullet as I thought strike the bush beyond the bear, which only looked towards us in the most undisturbed manner. The second barrel was more fortunate, turning him on his back without another move, this being the only instance of my ever having killed a bear dead in its tracks.

Jim, who was now within a hundred yards of the already dead bear, commenced firing, and, I verily believe, had I not stopped him, would have pumped every one of the fifteen bullets, with which his new repeating rifle was loaded, into, or more probably round, the carcase; as it was, on my assurance that the animal was dead, he contented himself with keeping close behind me as we approached. The bear was perfectly lifeless, the second bullet having passed clean through him just behind the shoulder, but not touching the heart, while the first was embedded in the wrist of the fore foot. Of Jim's shot we could find no vestige, nor did I expect it otherwise, for though when shooting at a mark he was fairly successful, like all Indians, he became utterly demoralised in the presence of game, while the effect of a repeating rifle is such that an Indian usually commences to fire immediately on sighting anything, and keeps it up, probably running all the time, until his entire stock of amunition is exhausted. The bear proved to be a very large black one, so old that what few teeth remained were worn level with the gums. The bear dog now proved his title to be genuine, by barking and furiously tearing out in mouthfulls, large tufts of the best fur in spite of kicks and imprecations. Whilst engaged in skinning, I found a thin round worm about fourteen inches long, lying between the skin and the flesh over the ribs. I gave Jim a severe lecture for attempting to shoot before me; having only been allowed to carry a rifle as a protection against grizzlies, he had faithfully promised to use it at nothing else. As soon as the skinning was completed, we returned to camp, I with the skin, he with the carcase, which was miserably thin, and possibly accounted for the bear's dying so easily, whilst the dogs were told off with the legs, a load they found terribly cumbersome and inconvenient in the bush. Next day we encountered serious obstructions in the way of fallen timber and rotten snow, finally reaching the celebrated cañon in the afternoon. That evening we took a short stroll with the dogs, which Jim deemed absolutely necessary, but I looked on as most undesirable. They soon started yelping after what he declared it be a bear, but which I have little hesitation in pronouncing to have been nothing more formidable than a hare. In a very few minutes I was left far in the rear vainly struggling to penetrate a mass of entwined willows, devoutly wishing Jim and his dogs in some much warmer climate. On the following day we proceeded further up the cañon, which proved about the roughest hunting ground I had ever encountered,

the entire surroundings being composed of rocks, fallen timber, rotten snow, or deep pools of muddy water. We saw several grizzly tracks, and many goats, but the latter I did not intend to hunt while there was a chance of finding a bear, though owing to their principal feeding grounds being still deeply covered with snow, the prospect of discovering one appeared vague. On the following day we penetrated still further up the cañon, finding more bear tracks. We finally decided to shoot a goat for food, for the two Indians and a boy we brought from the last village had gorged themselves to such an extent that having finished the bear, they commenced the well-known cry for food. Selecting the first we came across which was peacefully grazing high up on the side of the cañon, we commenced to scale a long snow slide, Jim keeping some twenty yards in advance until he arrived on a level with the goat, when he hurriedly disappeared in the brush, and finally long before I could catch up to him, I had the extreme satisfaction of hearing him fire no less than 19 times in rapid succession. This so thoroughly exasperated me that I immediately retraced my steps taking a somewhat shorter cut back to the snow slide, I found myself on a terribly precipitous piece of ground where I lost my footing but was lucky enough to grasp a twig sufficiently strong to hold me. With horror I felt the snow upon which I had slid slipping from under me, still clinging for life to the fragile brush, I beheld the snow slide assuming larger and larger proportions, until, with a mighty roar it swept down the side of the cañon, leaving me thanking my stars that a friendly bush had offered me its support in the very nick of time. I returned to camp so disgusted with Jim's conduct that I determined to go straight back to the Forks. Late in the afternoon Jim appeared loaded with a large she goat, about as much as I could lift clear of the ground, together with a live kid. That an undersized, slightly built man of Jim's calibre could have travelled over such a country carrying for about six miles so heavy and cumbersome a load was another proof of the remarkable enduring strength of an Indian.

The sight of the young goat which I was most anxious to rear, somewhat allayed my anger, but I was nevertheless determined to hunt in such company no longer. We therefore set out for the Forks next day. Having improvised a fairly satisfactory feeding bottle out of such material as I could obtain from the mother, I trudged along over between sixty and seventy miles, with that kid in my arms. It fed well on condensed milk and looked perfectly healthy until the fourth day, but on the fifth, when within two hours of our destination, having become rapidly weaker it died. The inconvenience and weariness of carrying so frail a creature met with but a poor return, and I heartily wished it had never been born. Added to this, I lost the trail and wandered off in the wrong direction for several hours, having left the camp at three o'clock in the morning in order to save the kid's life. The rest did not follow until much later, but on arriving at the Forks, and not hearing of me there, they immediately concluded that I had fallen into a cañon over which it was necessary to pass on a fallen tree. This, of course, alarmed L., and Indians were sent out in search of me. When nearly home I met one of them in an excited condition, and all I could gather from him was that the village had risen in arms and would kill me on my return. I must say I was considerably relieved ultimately, to find the population in its usual frame of mind, and only under the impression that I had gone under, but they had given L. a considerable scare. Seeing no prospect as yet of receiving our winter supply of provisions, which left Victoria in February, we decided, the river

being in flood, to leave them to follow, and start ourselves for Babine Lake, *en route* for Peace River. The object of my presence among them, proved to the Indians at the Forks, as great a riddle on my departure, as it had done when I first arrived. It appeared entirely beyond their comprehension that anyone could derive pleasure from hunting, a duty they regarded as irksome in the extreme, and only to be resorted to as a last resource, as entailing the hardest work they found themselves called upon to undertake. They, never wearied of enquiring, what the white Chief had come for? nor ever credited the answer.

Before leaving the Forks, a rather amusing conversation took place between L. and an Indian from the coast, who came to claim an imaginary debt, which, he said, we owed his wife.

Indian: "Where you husband?"

L.: "Away hunting."

Indian: "You know my wife, Mamaloose?"

L.: "Yes; I remember your wife Mamaloose."

Indian: "He owe her one dollar."

L.: "No, he payed her."

Indian: "My wife Mamaloose."

L.: "Yes; he paid your wife Mamaloose."

Indian: "My wife Mamaloose."

L.: "Why does not your wife Mamaloose come herself; you tell her to come?

Indian: "My wife Mamaloose."

L.: "I know her name is Mamaloose; what's the good of keeping on telling me that?"

Indian: "My wife Mamaloose." (digging with stick in the ground.)

L.: "I don't understand; tell Mamaloose to come here."

Exit Indian in a rage.

The key to the above was very simply discovered when I informed L., on my return, that Mamaloose was Chinook for dead.

1886-87.

ON SKEENA RIVER AT THE FORKS.—Lat. 55° 15′. Lon. 127° 40′.

Date.	November.		December.		January.		February.		March.	
	Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.	
	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.
1		—	5		16			12		1
2		—	6		12			20		7
3		—	6		10			32	25	
4		—	5		1			31	10	
5		—	3		2			38	8	
6		—	3		28			28	19	
7		—	4		18			25	27	
8			2			6		9		4
9			2		20			22	21	
10			6		24			15	23	
11			8		15			18		1
12			5		8			1	24	
13			4		8			16	12	
14			1		22			16	5	
15			3		26			1	4	
16			8			2	28		1	
17			5		27			5	4	
18			10		27		19		2	
19	12	—	8		25		29		4	
20	30	—	18		20			1	2	
21	26	—	17		25			19	2	
22	24	—	14		28			2	1	
23	18	—		1	31		20		7	
24	20	—		2	22			12	13	
25	10	—		12	25		30		4	
26	8	—		18	31		30		1	
27	—	—		20	28			3	—	
28	1	—	28		31		13		—	
29	4	—	26			5			—	
30	8	—	25			8			—	
31		—	20			14			—	

CHAPTER XVII.

WE started for Babine on the 10th of June, accompanied for the first couple of miles by the missionary and his wife, from whom we had received the greatest kindness. As the majority of our packers were women, each of whom carried a pack of something over 100 lbs., our progress was necessarily slow. For the first two days the trail was excellent, and we felt a decided relief at leaving the Forks, where the Indians had constantly threatened our total annihilation should we remain, and where the mosquitoes had rendered life unendurable on the low lying thickly timbered land, while the rapidly rising waters had already surrounded us. L. was provided with a very decent Indian horse, from which, except to swim an occasional river, she seldom found it necessary to dismount. The weather too was delightfully warm, orchids studded the sides of the trail, while little yellow violets peeped from behind their leaves in clusters, presenting an unusual contrast to their white and mauve sisters which were abundant on every side. The sun-flowers seemed in full bloom, their bright golden stars enlivening the way, while countless humming birds darted hither and thither with a metallic ring. But on the third day, the trail became most uninteresting and monotonous. On every side a barren, charred, rocky country, with all vestige of foliage destroyed by fire. There we met some Indians, who informed us that there was no snow on Babine Mountain, at which all rejoiced and left their snow shoes behind, hidden near the trail. The fourth day found us on the aforesaid mountain, ploughing through rotten snow three feet deep, and constantly breaking into another foot of water. After two or three hours of this excessively cooling and quite unexpected obstacle, we gradually descended the mountain, finally reaching Babine Lake, to be ferried across to the Indian village and Hudson Bay Store. Two articles have invariably struck me as looking thoroughly out of place in the hands of an Indian, namely, a knife and rifle. The former he never grasps otherwise than dagger fashion, which necessitates his cutting everything towards him. When whittling a stick, the point of the knife will be directed towards himself, that portion of the stick operated on, resting along the palm of the same hand in which the knife is held, between the little finger and the wrist, necessitating the most awkward and difficult manipulation.

A rifle he carries in the same fashion as the leading character in a Punch and Judy show holds his murderous club, pressed close to the lower portion of his chest, with his arms crossed in front to retain it there. It is invariably encassed in a moose skin covering, elaborately fringed, in which it remains till the last moment before being discharged, when as often as not, the cap is the only thing that explodes. Doubtless, few persons are aware that the old fashioned flint muskets are still manufactured in England and sold to the Indians, who prefer them, in many instances, to rifles of more recent date. I once found one of these in the Big Horn Mountains, which on being lifted from the ground crumbled in pieces, leaving only the barrel in my hand. This circumstance, in connection with the rugged surroundings, brought vividly before my mind the weird Kaatskill Mountain scene in Rip van Winkle. I remember

being at the time much perplexed, at distinguishing a comparatively recent date, engraved on this ancient looking piece, having no idea than they were still manufactured.

We remained but two days at Babine, being ever anxious to escape the inevitable disagreeables existing about an Indian village, though we regretted leaving the river where a handsome, sturdy and most lively description of trout, weighing up to four pounds, took the fly freely, but fly fishing from a canoe is a doubtful pleasure, while such canoes as existed here made it doubly difficult. Canoes lacking every practical turn and curve which usually constitutes a boat, they were in fact nothing more or less than hollowed logs, warped into every conceivable shape caveing in where there was no seat, and bulging out where it existed, altogether the most wretched attempt at boats.

We left the Forks with a very small supply of eatables, relying upon getting plenty of bacon and sugar at Babine, but the store was entirely cleared out, and the wild fowl which swarm on the lake in May, and upon which I had relied for meat, had all taken their departure leaving behind nothing but northern divers and mergansers. These appeared to be the only birds which bred here; but as eating them, except as a last resource, was out of the question, we were forced to fall back upon trout, we therefore fixed up our camp about twenty-five miles from Babine solely dependent upon our spoon baits for sustenance. In the locality we had chosen, fish did not appear very plentiful, and we seldom caught more than we could consume, which consisted of two varieties of trout, one a large sluggish dark fish, somewhat resembling a Pike in markings, and affording no more play, usually known as black trout, we caught scaling up to 18 lbs., but in the best part of the lake, which seemed about forty miles from Babine, they increased in size. The large ones keeping near the bottom, a heavy lead was necessary. We used at first to fish with rods, but found them quite unsuited to this kind of sport, where far more execution could be done, by holding the line in the hand. The second was a handsome silvery salmon shaped fish with black spots exceedingly strong and active, seldom weighing more than 7 lbs., affording good sport and far more successfully handled with than without a rod, but unequal to the other in flavour. I am inclined to think that the black trout spawned about the time of our advent, for at first, most of them contained spawn, whereas, for some time before we left we caught none in condition. White fish were very plentiful, but we had to content ourselves with looking at them through the water, for they are said to take no bait, though had I been successful in procuring the worms I wasted so much time in seeking, I fancy I might have landed a few. One day having sought the protection of our mosquito netting in order to avoid the ceaseless onslaught of the sand flies, we were suddenly alarmed by the agonised voice of Fred, who was chopping firewood close by, calling "come out quick, there's a tree a falling right across the tent, we naturally bundled out in hot haste, L. having got half way through the door commenced frantically bucking at the fastening which she had no time to undo until it finally gave way, when we found Fred who stands between four feet and five feet high, fondly embracing a tree some fifteen inches in diameter, vainly imagining that by his herculean strength he was retaining it in an upright position, thereby prolonging our lives. I presently remarked that the tree appeared to me in no degree out of the perpendicular, and when I finally persuaded him to relinquish his hold, he was

firmly under the impression that by so doing the anticipated catastrophe would be brought about, however, very gently he disengaged his little arms, and on looking up it gradually dawned on him that he had been the victim of an optical delusion. The fact was that while chopping he had glanced above and beheld the fleeting clouds passing across the sky, this very ordinary circumstance simply conveyed to Fred's imagination the fact that the tree was falling, and in the opposite direction to what he had anticipated, therefore with characteristic promptitude he rushed forward to hold it up during our pleasure.

On July 7th, having secured the services of a log-like canoe and a couple of Indians, we started for the Portage. During the three days' journey we caught a number of exceedingly large trout, but after successfully weathering a heavy storm, the full force of which we experienced in the centre of the lake, we felt little regret at the termination of 110 miles canoeing on a most uninteresting piece of water, with not a scrap of picturesque scenery to relieve its monotony save at the southern extremity, where the surroundings became mountainous, and the quaint bottle-necked nests of the cliff swallows were clustered in hundreds over the bluff rocks. Here the black trout disappeared, leaving the water free to the white fish and silver trout, which increased considerably in size. I had expected to find a bear or two, but saw little sign of them. I believe that later on, when the salmon are lying dead in hundreds, they frequent the banks in considerable numbers to obtain this savoury delicacy, though when it suits their purpose they are quite capable of capturing the living fish, then in a weak and sickly condition. All around Babine is a great country for caribou, while the few mountain sheep which have been killed, must, I fancy, have lost themselves. Goats were still to be found, more or less plentifully, on certain mountains. The Babine Indians, though of a different tribe, we had found even greater thieves than those at the Forks. One who set considerable store on having lived with Bishop Ridley for two years, thereby picking up a smattering of English, and a highly-cultivated taste for scent (with which he asked L. to provide him for his handkerchief, at the same time stating that he liked to sprinkle it on his shirt after it was washed), had on one or two occasions made himself useful by finishing the scraps and washing up the plates while we were fishing on Babine River. He abruptly terminated our acquaintance by calling at daybreak one morning and gnawing the spoon-bait off the rod which was standing outside the tent, for L. and I, owing to the scarcity of sport in the lake, had taken a few necessaries in a little canoe lent us by Mr. McIntosh at the Hudson Bay Company's store, and returned to Babine, pitching our tent some way down the river away from the village. Here we had good sport for a couple of days, leaving Fred at our permanent camp, fully under the impression that during our absence he would be murdered by some passing Indians. However, we found him alive and well on our return, though surrounded by loaded rifles in anticipation of a siege. This made the second spoon we had had stolen in spite of every previous precaution. I had given this christian Indian a handsome present of hooks and gut only the day previously, but possibly, having turned Roman Catholic, the Bishop's teachings were forgotten, though to do justice to missions in general I should remark that on entering the village of Babine we were at once struck with a proof of Catholic influence by the total absence of chiefs' Poles, and the feastings and destruction of property connected therewith. Indeed, since leaving Mr. Duncan's Metlakahtla, this was the first indication of any good results emanating from mission work,

though I failed to remark any improvement in the Indians themselves, who appeared highly elated at the prospect of their Priest being shortly expected among them. Marvellous to relate, they had actually of their own free will gone to fetch him from Stewart's Lake, and in a few days he passed our camp, followed by every Indian in the district to the number of one hundred or more. During the few minutes' conversation I had with him—for he firmly declined to accept of any hospitality at our hands—I gathered that his opinion of the Indians was very poor, and indeed, on his arrival at Babine, he found they had gone back to such an extent, and revived so many old customs, that he cast them off, finding the greatest difficulty in obtaining a canoe to return in. Arrived at the Portage we immediately dispatched one of our crew to Stewart's Lake for the Hudson Bay Company's waggon, but so great was the terror of grizzlies in this locality, where they appeared to be plentiful, that he refused to walk the nine miles unless I provided him with a pistol. Having complied with his request I started off in the hopes of finding one of these phantom monsters for myself; but though on two evenings I hunted over many miles of the roughest and most likely-looking country, my search was unproductive, but from all accounts I appeared to be the only person in these parts who had not been, according to their own showing, either hotly pursued or partially devoured by these animals.

In due course the waggon arrived, an Indian lad holding the reins while my messenger flogged the horses unmercifully, keeping them in full gallop. It being too late to start that evening, we decided on an early move the following morning; but as two of the horses had strayed during the night, it took till three o'clock to find them, and then one which objected to being caught at any price had to be left to follow at his leisure. Supposing the boy who brought the waggon to have been in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, and therefore in the habit of accompanying the team, I paid no particular attention to the harnessing, and the first start was effected without the reins being buckled to the bits, fortunately no accident occurred, while the omission was rectified by all four reins being attached to one horse. On observing this, I asked if the boy was in the habit of harnessing and driving the team, and learned that he had never done so before; but that as no one else was at the other end of the portage, he had undertaken our safe conduct; from the showy style in which he had arrived, I concluded that the reins would be safer in my own hands, and therefore took the box seat, which happened to be upon a coffee-pot and frying-pan, the former emerging from the fray as flat as the latter, for though called a waggon road, and doubtless an excellent one in its own country, it would in civilized parts have been regarded as almost impassable. The ready imagination of the Indian whom I had provided with a pistol, had suggested to him while executing my commission, to make known to his friends that a great White Tyee, or Chief, was on the trail. This doubtful honour of distinction entailed eventually an enormous amount of hand shaking, and undoubtedly doubled our expenses, the general curiosity being much increased at the prospect of viewing the first white woman, so far as I could learn, ever seen in those parts. Already we were met by the Chief and five of his tribe from a small settlement on the portage. Along the trail, or I should say waggon road, a large fire was raging, evidently of recent origin, for I had passed over the same ground the evening before, when all was green, and had watched the grouse busily engaged with their broods. How had this fire come about, we asked. "Oh, the Chief, while coming to meet us, had heard a grizzly bear, so immediately fired the bush," the usual practice under such

CROSSING THE STEWART'S LAKE PORTAGE.

circumstances, and had then taken to his heels. Thus by a reckless act in this case, instigated by cowardice, a conflagration was commenced which would in all probability burn throughout the entire summer, the immediate result being in any event, the destruction of an immense amount of small game and timber. Here Mule deer were to be found, but I doubt if they were very plentiful, though as they were then high in the mountains, I had no opportunity of seeing anything of them beyond a few dried heads. We camped that night at the mouth of a little river on the margin of Stewart's Lake; that the dread of the Indians so far as the actual existence of grizzlies was genuine we had ample proof, for, at intervals, throughout the night their decidedly disagreeable roar pierced the still air at no great distance, causing me to feel much tempted to try conclusions with them, though I knew such an attempt would but prove futile at night and in thick brush. Though much inclined to stay and hunt for a few days, I was bound to proceed with all speed, having heard that Mr. Alexander, upon whom I depended for accurate information on some future hunting details, was about to leave his post at Fort St. James. We therefore hired the only canoe at double the usual price, for one duly paid for homage here as elsewhere, and no sooner had they nominated me a Tyee than they commenced to levy what they considered adequate extortions, adding insult to injury by personally enquiring why so rich a man should travel in so poor a country.

While traversing the lake our crew neglected to call at no single village or hut where the slightest opportunity offered for exhibiting their freight, subjecting us to the sickening and revolting ordeal of having our hands slobbered over by toothless, gummy, old hags, and observing various signs of hypocritical humiliation on the part of other semi-savages, who it now suited to assume an air of meek supplication.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STEWARD'S Lake presented an agreeable relief to the densely wooded flat appearance existing around that which we had recently left, though the scenery here could scarcely be considered grand, entirely surrounded by mountains, some well timbered, and others of barren rock, the lake though only about forty miles long, was of considerable breadth, and freely dotted with picturesque little islands.

The silver and black trout appeared plentiful and large, except in the regular canoe course, nor could their equal abundance there have been reasonably expected, when every passing canoe trails its indispensable spoon bait, the possession of which equips an Indian with all he needs to support life, fish forming their staple food. Even in winter the large black trout are taken by lowering the spoon bait through a hole chopped in the ice, and pulling it rapidly upwards, or by spearing with a live bait tethered by a string through the back as a lure. On July 13th we camped in a secluded spot about a mile from the Hudson Bay Company Fort, where we proposed to remain until our winter supply arrived, had we not been literally forced to beat a hasty retreat by the mosquitoes and sandflies finally to take refuge in the centre of a bare field belonging to the company, even there our lives were sometimes rendered a burden to us. I used to imagine that to live among mosquitoes simply required a

little endurance, but I am now convinced that to do so is an impossibility, and if the infernal regions of the future have been rendered too hot for mosquitoes and sandflies, then by an oversight, have two of the most exquisite of tortures been omitted, which undoubtedly should have been provided for; but without anticipating, I would warn those who propose camping in any part of the back woods infested by these atoms of irritation, that the result of doing so in June or July is beyond the powers of human nature to endure, so long as a stiff breeze can be relied on, all goes well enough, but directly it fails, crawl under your mosquitoe curtains. No one would, however, care to remain there all day, yet it is the only means of escape. We had hit upon an unusually hot summer, and one therefore particularly encouraging to the winged tribe, even in our open field we found them bad, and they are, I believe, quite capable of killing a human being. That they have frequently destroyed horses, mules, etc., there appears ample proof. I scarcely know which of the two I detest most, the slim, leggy, ever vigilant mosquito, which I have watched drawing away my blood, until so distended, that in the effort to extract its sting it burst itself, or the small, dry bull dog natured sandfly, which when once it has plunged its bunch of lancets deep into your flesh, will suffer death rather than withdraw, leaving finally a tiny stream of blood flowing, with an utter disregard for waste, only equalled by an Indian; true this pest has one redeeming quality, it takes its rest betimes, never intruding itself at night, possibly this providential saving of the midnight oil, may account for its outliving the mosquitoes by several weeks. A few midges similar to those in England, sometimes caused us slight annoyance, and also a large horsefly, whose sudden and excessive stab caused its immediate discovery and death, ere ultimate mischief ensued. These were the only flies to be feared, the two first to be avoided at all costs. Of all these the only one which finally meets with its deserts, is the large horsefly, whose persecutor, a big black wasp, appears in August, and from its first arrival its whole aim and object in life seems to be the total annihilation of the horsefly, in search of which it hawks throughout the day, swiftly swooping on its victim, which it seizes in the air, and immediately conveys to a suitable prominence, from whence it can suspend itself by one hind leg, while crunching up its prey, of which in the course of a minute nothing remains save the wings and a few particles of shell. On all occasions we avoided killing these wasps, having a long standing account against the flies, which used to congregate in a cloud about us while bathing, the first piece of flesh appearing out of water being instantly perforated by their darts, wet skin seeming to offer an irresistible temptation.

For days the air was dense with myriads of May flies, what a triumph, I often thought, could I have transferred these dancing dainties to a certain spot in Hampshire, where when a boy, I used to see them in clouds, but where now, alas, they are things of the past and totally extinct. As a summer resort Stewart's Lake is a place to be avoided, and judging from the wind which blew continuously, I should imagine that in winter it would be equally undesirable. We received much kindness from Mr. Alexander, the officer in charge, who was unfortunately away, with the exception of a few days, throughout our protracted stay; but who, thanks to his hospitality in giving us the run of his most comfortable house, relieved us to a great extent from the monotony of spending the entire day in a dusty, sun-dried field, for beyond some indifferent fishing there was little means of whiling away the shining

hours, unless it were the somewhat tame amusement of picking wild raspberries and strawberries, which grew in abundance, the former quite equal in size and flavour to those from a cultivated garden. Bright and sunny the days certainly were, the most charming weather desirable, neither too hot nor too cold, a fortunate circumstance in the former instance, for the persecution of the mosquitoes forbade the possibility of wearing anything cooler than leather on stout frieze, the thickest woollen stockings affording no protection whatever against them. One never failing source of amusement existed of a nature little to be anticipated in such out of the way regions, namely, a billiard table with a vividly blue cloth, a relic of past mining days. Fort St. James was once a large settlement, and the winter resort, I believe, of a number of miners, who having long since exhausted the supply of precious metal have dispersed to distant fields. The great drawback to a game in Mr. Alexander's absence was that but one man remained who knew the tip from the butt of a cue. Unfortunately the south end of Stewart's Lake was shallow, consequently we never had an opportunity of catching any more large trout, though we found plenty of indifferent sport in Stewart's river, where no less than seven varieties of fish, two or three being trout, rose freely to the fly; but all sport was ruined by the gluttony of a large-mouthed, boney, unpalatable fish, which seized the fly on every available occasion, affording when hooked about as much play as a small log, frequently even dying in the bottom of the canoe without having indulged in a single kick since being thrown there. The only fish worth catching was a handsome trout, with a red streak down the side, but as this species only inhabited the river below the first rapid, down which we were unable to get the canoe, we seldom indulged in its capture, fishing from the precipitous bank being exceedingly difficult and the sandflies unendurable. I, one day, after much coaxing induced a sucker, of which there were great numbers, to take a fly, an almost unprecedented performance I believe. Another fish we caught much resembled a grayling, locally known as round fish. Sturgeon entered the lake in July and were said to weigh up to five and six hundred pounds. The first salmon was taken by the Indians on August 2nd, this was the only species which occupied the lake, they were most peculiar looking fish, none weighing over nine pounds, of a sickly reddish-mauve colour, the males being humped backed, these were the only fish of the salmon species I had as yet come across, which resembled the true salmon in respect to a fleshy dorsal fin; no actual scales were distinguishable, though the skin appeared to indicate the presence of a scanty supply, and only on carefully searching with a knife was I enabled to detach one, which appeared entirely buried beneath an outer skin. These fish crowd into the lake in thousands, and thence up the rivers and streams flowing into it, where they die in hundreds, chiefly, I believe, for want of accommodation, for they push on and on until for lack of space they are actually crowded up high and dry on the banks. I fancy that except for the indolence of the Indians who do not commence their annual blocking up of the river with stakes and snares until the first appearance of the fish, which gives the early run an opportunity of penetrating into the lake, few, if any, would reach their spawning grounds. A larger and different species of salmon commenced to run later on; but it seems this fish has no desire to enter the lake, or even to approach the Indians' blockade. The white fish were as usual plentiful, but I had no opportunities of testing their excellent qualities.

The fact I am about to relate, will possibly strike most persons as incredible, though those who have experimentalized on frogs will find no difficulty in accepting it as a true statement. In a small lake, a few miles from Fort St. James, the Indians during the winter scoop up with nets from spots where some spring prevents the water freezing, large quantities of small fish which are excellent eating. As I am credibly informed, these fish are tumbled into a bag or basket, and supposing it to be a cold day, probably below zero, when they are brought home, say three or four hours after being caught, they are all frozen into a solid mass, just as they were thrown into the receptacle, but when placed in cool water, they naturally commence to thaw, and as each thaws out it regains animation, and eventually, if uninjured at the time of capture, it swims about in perfect health; this also occurs with other fish taken from Stewart's Lake, possibly with all fish, for aught I know to the contrary; but the weather must be sufficiently cold to freeze them before natural death from suffocation has time to take place. On the 10th of July, the Hudson Bay Company killed a steer, providing us with the first fresh meat we had obtained for very many months, in fact, with the exception of two grouse and a small duck, the only meat of any description for a considerable time. Of trout and bread we had become heartily sick, but nothing else was procurable; the Hudson Bay Company being entirely cleared out. We had even descended to making a futile effort at consuming a crow, in which attempt all failed, even the cat. Owing to the warmth of the weather, the meat soon turned off, leaving us once more to fall back on bread; for fish, unless we caught them ourselves, were not to be had; as for wild game, with the exception of bears, none existed within a two days' journey, and even there, judging from the quantities of fires raging in all directions, I should think it doubtful if they had not been smoked out; but these Indians cared little for game, they always had their fish, and would as soon start a destructive fire as not; no less than eight did we see burning at one time, and those within a small compass, for the mountains obscured three parts of the hemisphere. Fires such as these have been known to burn for three years, the winter's snow failing to reach them, so far do they descend into the earth, the whole atmosphere was constantly one cloud of smoke, while a sunset was rarely witnessed owing to the heavy pall hanging over the horizon.

The canoes on Stewart's Lake, though poor, were vastly superior to the imbecile efforts of the Babine Indians, and for safety, a good canoe is requisite on these waters; for within five minutes, from a quiet calm, a perfect gale will suddenly arise, causing a heavy sea to run. A disagreeable experience, such as this, overtook us while crossing Babine Lake, when being compelled to run before the wind, it was touch and go whether we got pooped or no. We noticed many points of improvement in the Stewart Lake Indians, they even, latterly, sometimes offered us a fish when they had plenty, without apparently anticipating anything in return. We observed no painting of the faces among them, many of the elder people, particularly the women, were tatooed, the usual pattern being three straight lines, descending from the corner of the mouth and centre of lower lip, though the chins of some were covered with a chess board design, while others had their foreheads decorated, but the present generation had evidently given up the practice. Near the mouth of Stewart's River, for some unknown reason, the water never freezes. There in winter, the Indians catch quantities of grebe in nets, they make no use of any part of the bird, except the oil, which is carefully extracted, and must prove sufficiently disgusting to provide a *bon bouche* for an Indian palate. At Fort St. James, I made the discovery

that I had frequently wasted many hours in grubbing after earthworms for fishing, certainly I never found one, and it was not likely I should if my informant was correct, for he asserted without hesitation, that no such thing existed in British Columbia, though I am inclined to think they would be found further south.

CHAPTER XIX.

I MADE on various occasions the strictest inquiries as to the cause of the almost total disappearance of Arctic hares, which before reaching the Forks, I had been assured I should find in every bush, and that the Indians would bring in such quantities, that we should become heartily sick of them, but during the whole of our visit to British Columbia, I never saw one alive, though I occasionally found their tracks in the snow, while for food, we looked on them as the greatest luxury. After listening to what everyone had to say on the subject, I have come to the conclusion, that about every seventh year, an extraordinary mortality takes place among them, hundreds being found dead in the spring, the result of this is that for the next few years, scarcely a hare can be found, but they gradually again increase until about the sixth year when they are once more present in hundreds, only to repeat the process of dying off and re-accumulating. It appeared to me to be probably some disease arising from overcrowding, such is not unknown in England.

On the disappearance of the hares, Lynx migrate in consequence of their favourite food being no longer procurable. this fact leads me to question whether the reported and hitherto unexplained occasional disappearance of Marten may not be caused by a similar mortality among mice. With our usual ill-luck, we struck British Columbia the very year the hares died, I find it difficult to call them otherwise than rabbits, for in summer when their fur is brown there is little difference in their appearance or size, from the common rabbit, but in winter they assume a snowy white coat and must be almost indistinguishable from their surroundings, hence I may very likely have overlooked several. I heard also of a curious method of capturing the ruffed grouse, which was formerly resorted to by the Indians who, when guns were a rarity and a charge of powder and ball cost a Marten skin, scarcely cared to waste a shot over such a trifle. Their capture was therefore effected by the use of the ash from burnt cottonwood which is exceeding light, this was placed on a log where a grouse was known to take up his position for drumming, the wily savage would then retire to a distance to await the result. his vigil being finally rewarded by seeing the grouse hop on to the log and take up his accustomed stand in the centre of the ashes, then stiffen up and commence slowly flapping his wings, rapidly quickening the movement, until amid a cloud of fine dust, half choked and blinded he could be easily seized upon by his enemy. Though I could find no information to that effect, I had reason to suppose there were three varieties of ruffed grouse in British Columbia, one being much redder and somewhat larger than the others, which were again distinguishable, the one being still smaller and greyer than the other. Their object in drumming was a complete mystery to me, I believe only the male birds indulge in

the practice, seemingly they remained in the same spot for hours drumming at intervals of from five minutes to a quarter of an hour throughout the day and frequently during the entire night, though the early morning and evening seemed their favourite times. I have heard them in every month except from November to March, and never did pride more readily bring about a fall, than with these birds, which in the first place invariably proclaim their presence within half a mile's radius, and finally declare their exact situation; even then so well satisfied are they with their performances, that they fail to realize the necessity of a move until their heads are blown off, for such is the frequent result of their drumming in thick brush which renders them invisible at six paces. In winter, too, they

Indian of the past.

lay themselves open to be snapped up by any of the numerous animals ever prowling in search of such delicacies by diving completely under the snow to the depth of seven or eight inches with every probability of being frozen in, in the event of a high wind blowing the fine snow over their retreat, for how many days at a time they remain thus warmly housed, I could not ascertain, but in cold weather I have over and over again been startled by a grouse suddenly appearing with considerable noise, and in a cloud of snow from a spot which had previously borne no more indication of harbouring a living creature than the frozen surroundings, but now that the bird had broken out, a snug little hole and passage was perceptible about a foot in depth.

CHAPTER XX.

WEARILY the time dragged on, nor, from what I could gather from traders who had been lately in those parts, was the hunting on Peace River so good as I had anticipated, clearly it was not what it used to be. The moose, they said, had almost disappeared, driven out by the large and increasing packs of wolves; the sequel being that moose which had never previously been heard of were being killed within 18 miles of Fort St. James, their reported absence affected me but little, one moose's head would be quite hideous enough to satisfy my desires in that respect. The bears, sheep, caribou, and goats still to be found there would provide me with ample sport so far as big game was concerned, while the trapping was good and varied. The Syckanese Indians inhabiting those parts were well spoken of, being the only tribe I had as yet heard mentioned without a shower of well-merited abuse, they were usually known as Stick Indians, on account of living in the woods and having no fixed homes. They wandered over the country entirely dependent on the game they killed. The middle of August passed, and still no sign of our winter's supply, nor had any food arrived for the fort, and I began to be seriously apprehensive lest we should be too late. We ought to have reached our winter's quarters by this time, yet through the delay of others here we were stranded hard and fast, finally the dreaded blow fell scattering before the winds all our pre-arranged plans. Owing to the lateness of the season and the large amount of goods to be freighted, the Hudson Bay Company, on whom I was entirely dependent for transportation, showed me that, though with the best intentions, my outfit not yet having arrived, it would be impossible for them to supply me with horses, etc. I need not dwell on this second disappointment, those who have experienced anything of the sort will I am sure sympathise. As the Americans say, I felt "bad" at having at the last moment once more to abandon my proposed hunting ground.

A Syckanese Tomahawk and Pipe.

Before leaving Stewart's Lake I made the acquaintance of as fine a specimen of a nigger as Virginia ever produced, a man whose rare experiences, roaming disposition, and profound principles, are calculated even yet to rival "Uncle Tom's Cabin," for truth is stranger than fiction, and this nigger, who for lack of the education he deeply laments never having had an opportunity of acquiring, has been unable hitherto to write his life, still purposes after his next pilgrimage to do so by proxy, but I fear lest he may prolong his wanderings so far that death will step in to terminate the existence of a life, the experiences of which are doubtless well worthy of record. John Thomas, or Uncle Tom as he was familiarly called, was at the time I met him, a still handsome looking nigger, 66 years of age, young in appearance for his years, a huge massively built man, standing something over 6ft. 3in. He was born a slave in Louisiana, had been owned by three masters, and for the last 25 years since receiving his freedom had been of his own free will a wanderer on the

face of the earth. He started out with two dollars, one he spent, the other he still possessed. After tramping through most of the United States, he turned his steps towards British Columbia, and appeared to have visited every inhabited and most outlandish portion of it. He never accepted money, but whenever he found himself on a spot which took his fancy, there he would rest awhile, working in any capacity for those who would feed and clothe him, until the ever returning desire for travel once more overcame him, when he would make another start. Of recent years he had journeyed from one Hudson Bay post to another, and such an acquisition was only too readily seized upon by the Company, who would willingly have retained him at his own terms for the remainder of his existence. Uncle Tom had a decided religious tendency, in fact all his actions were based on religious principles, and I believe him to have been perfectly sincere, his great idea seemed to be that one should possess nothing on this earth, and most rigidly he stuck to his principles, not even owning a penknife, nor so much as a pocket in his clothes. He enjoyed nothing better than what he called a chaw of baccor, but though the company would readily have given him a pound at a time, he preferred to be dependent on the generosity of any person he saw using it. For 25 years he had lived this life of dependence, which he found provided him with all his wants. Only once, said he, did a man refuse me help, and he was a missionary. On bidding him farewell, and sincerely wishing him success in his proposed visit to Alaska, I could not help feeling that this final pilgrimage would prove the last straw, and that he would be well advised to seek retirement and commence his book, lest the grim spectre, who could not be a great distance behind him on the trail, should overtake this restless spirit ere his work was done. However, if I am ever destined to read the life of the second Uncle Tom, it will prove doubly interesting from the fact of my having been personally acquainted with so remarkable a character.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON the 29th of September we left Stewart's Lake in two canoes bound for Fort George, some 150 miles distant. In shooting the first rapid, owing to the carelessness of the Indians, our canoe fairly grounded on the rocks; while the second one came into violent collision with a boulder, thereby sustaining a serious crack. This was doubly annoying, from the fact of this canoe having been borrowed without the owner's permission, in which case I felt myself responsible for the damage, which in a previously sound canoe would be a considerable item. But little of interest transpired during the two-and-a-half days' journey. The river for the most part was easily navigated, but our crews, taking them as a whole, were the most insolent, and in other respects the most unsatisfactory, we had as yet had dealings with.

To all appearance the river was most sporting, and I should much like to have made the trip some three weeks later, by which time geese and ducks would have arrived in numbers, to occupy the numerous little backwaters, pools and flat grassy marshes, all of which looked so perfectly enticing, that I could scarcely conceive them to be as yet untenanted, save by a few mallard. From reliable information and

the examination of several dried skins, I believe that no less than eight varieties of geese frequent this river in the autumn and spring, including two varieties of snow geese, pure white, with the exception of the pinion feathers, which were black, one differing from the other only in size; but of course, being so early I saw none, though I obtained a few shots at ducks, which were much appreciated in the cooking department. I killed on the way down one bear, one coyote, and one skunk from the canoe. These, with the exception of another coyote and a mule deer, locally known as jumping deer, were all the game we encountered, as rapidly gliding down Stewart's River and thence into the Nechahoo River, we finally emerged into the Fraser about a mile above Fort George. This had been our first experience of easy down stream travelling, so vastly superior to the tugging, poling, and shoving slowly uphill which we had previously endured, and were yet once more to encounter. After leaving the clear rapid waters of the Stewart and Nechahoo Rivers, to enter the more sedate and mud-laden Fraser, we quickly found ourselves in view of the small Indian village of Fort George, near which we pitched our tent and piled up the freight accompanying us. There we remained three days to await the arrival of one of the Hudson Bay Company boats from Quesnelle, which was hourly expected, and which might, we hoped, contain some sort of food, for like all the other posts, Fort George was entirely without provisions with the exception of flour; but on her arrival she was found completely laden with the latter article. A short time previously a canoe specially sent from Fort George to Quesnelle for provisions, returned with a cargo of gum boots and shovels, much to the disgust of the hungry storekeeper and ever ravenous Indians, whose marvellous digestions were quite unequal to such a meal. While staying here L. and I, on the second day, after carefully closing the tent, set off on a foraging expedition, she hunting for grouse, while I took a longer round in search of a bear. L., returning first, beheld in the distance our tent apparently in convulsions, and on hastening up discovered it to be occupied by a cow, which had gained admittance by ripping up the canvas, and was busily engaged on the most gloriously varied banquet she had ever had the opportunity of indulging in. As it may interest the reader to know what articles of wearing apparel, etc., are specially acceptable to a Fort George cow, I herewith enumerate the list. Some other things entirely disappeared, but were not missed at the time; one red blanket, partly eaten, also a blue one minus the corner; fur coat mouthed, clearly not appreciated; a blue cloth shirt, both the arms eaten; four handkerchiefs reduced to pulp, others missing; one blue and red silk handkerchief, finished; one pair of stockings, partly eaten; two towels, pulp; one red quilt, lined with fur, ripped to pieces and partly eaten; one bag of salt demolished, proving an epicurean taste. This was pretty good for one cow, and as there were many more in the same enclosure, it was a matter of congratulation that they had not seen fit to join in the feast, or I fear our entire outfit would have ill-sufficed to appease their unnatural craving for such food.

At Fort George a marked improvement was noticeable in the Indians, who appeared more civilised and far less objectionable than our former acquaintances. They thieved, of course, but not in so insolent a manner. They considered themselves catholics, and were frequently visited by the priest from Stewart's Lake. These priests deny that they are in any way responsible for the flogging to which erring catholic Indians are subjected, and which is brought about by a selected body of spies, they also deny being instrumental in a torture savouring much of the days of

the Inquisition, which was thus described to me by an eye witness, who had seen it resorted to on many occasions. The Indian who has been spied upon and discovered committing some prohibited sin, is condemned to be tied, a rope is knotted in a single loop round his wrists, the hands being placed together, two or more men then haul at each end of the rope until the tortured Indian expresses penitence, when the knot is slightly loosened, and he or she is left for as many as seven days without food, while fastened in a helpless condition, whether the natural repugnance to immorality, for I believe that to be the principal offence, is so great in an Indian as to suggest the necessity of this torture, and the floggings, or whether it is at the instigation of the priest, I must leave the reader to judge for himself. The Catholic religion appeared far more popular than any other among the Indians, and so far as outward show and strict attention to morning and evening prayer went, they bore every indication of sincerity, though, I fancy, if deprived of their crucifixes and beads, this religion would offer no greater attraction for them than any other, less in accordance with their naturally superstitious natures.

We received the most marked kindness and attention from Mr. Ogden, the officer in charge of the Hudson Bay Company's store, who was unceasing in his endeavour to further our progress, eventually supplying us with five of the best Indians we had ever had dealings with, and promising to send us our stores immediately on their arrival. We found considerable difficulty in procuring canoes, but Mr. Ogden lent us his own till the spring, another smaller one I bought, and the third was hired, the prices these Indians ask and receive for labour is enormous, it cost us more than double what we paid to go up the Skeena, and not half the fatigue or time was expended on the journey, which was less than half the distance, but what ruin the missionary has failed to complete, the miner has promptly stepped in and effected by reckless extravagances in his eager search for gold, overpaying the Indians to the same extent as the missionaries over estimate them. Finally, all being in readiness, we steadily stemmed the gentle current of the placid looking Fraser, how little resemblance the river bore here to the mighty and impassable rapids and cañons above and below, but here the only bad water we shall have will be two or three days hence, consisting of a series of rapids by no means formidable, then all will be clear again till the cañon some hundred miles ahead.

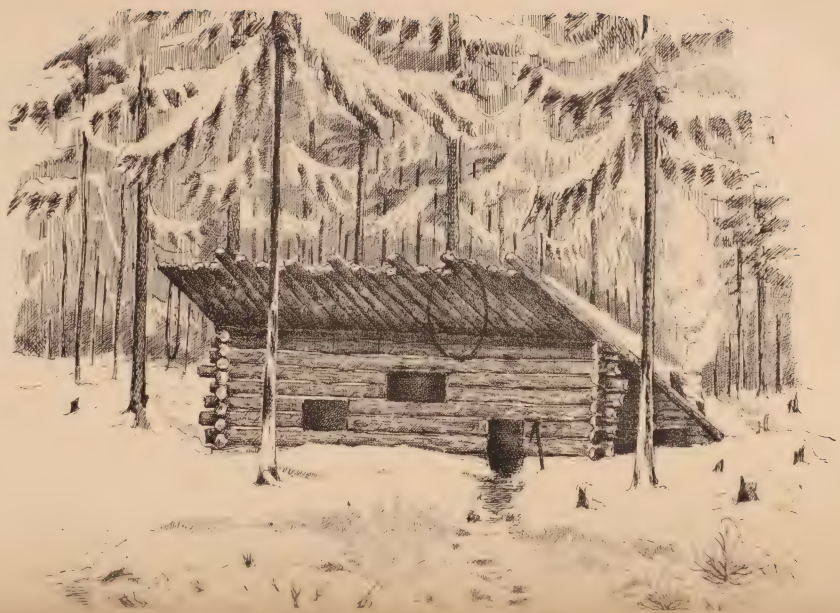
During the first day we passed Goose river, so named on account of the number of geese frequenting its marshes on their way south in the fall, and again on their return journey northwards in the spring; we saw six standing on the mud at the mouth of a little creek, affording an excellent opportunity for a stalk which was successfully brought off by my bagging two and losing a third. Next day found us among the rapids, providing Fred with ample opportunity for displaying his punting powers, for being in the small canoe, we had only one Indian, whose work was pretty well cut out in making up for Fred's want of skill. After passing Caribou river, we finally camped without having seen much sign of game. Camping ground on the banks of the Fraser is cramped, sandy and bad, while the general aspect of the water held out little inducement to the fisherman to try his luck, or to the fish themselves I should imagine, from its thick muddy appearance, yet we saw an occasional dead salmon, and the Indians spoke of the mighty sturgeon inhabiting it, one of which was seen partially out of water for an instant, these they sometimes catch with a

line and hook, baited with a sucker, and set at the mouth of some such tributary as Bear river, which is a favourite spot for them. On the third day we reached Grizzly Portage, the hitherto occasional bear tracks now commenced to thicken, and were henceforth fresh and plentiful on the soft mud; the berry bearing bushes being torn down and trampled under foot by the bears whilst eagerly partaking of their last variety of food, consisting of a small white berry growing in clusters, unwholesome to look at, and exceedingly nasty to eat, ere retiring to their *caches* for their prolonged winter doze; not a bear did we see however, nor could we expect to do so with the poles constantly rattling against the sides of the canoe, to obviate which in such water was almost impossible. Salmon river we passed on the morning of the fourth day; there after a long stalk, I succeeded in bagging one goose. The Fraser appeared to offer no attractions for wild fowl, while all its lesser tributaries were plentifully supplied, especially with Canadian geese. Late in the afternoon, on reaching Bear river, I immediately proceeded with two Indians in the small canoe, to explore this gamey sounding stream, where I found, much to my surprise, that contrary to the usual custom, it had been reasonably named; for undoubtedly to judge from the quantities of fresh tracks, a considerable number of bears worked its banks, and with beaver too, it appeared crowded: for the last two days we had passed plenty of their houses of the most unassuming proportions, mere holes in the banks surmounted by a few sticks, principally used as summer resorts, some tenanted, most deserted; out of those occupied, we occasionally poked an unsuspecting beaver, which would in time come to the surface of the water, usually on the other side of the river, and nearly always out of shot; however by this means I had killed one, and the Indians in the other canoes two. With the greatest caution, and without a sound, stealthily the Indians paddled, for they had noted one quite recent track, clearly that of a grizzly, which, though constantly leaving the bank, ever returned again to the water's edge, as we proceeded, evidently finding that travelling in the dense bush was too fatiguing for his present gross condition, so heavily laden with the winter's supply of fat. After continuing onwards for about a mile, scarcely daring to whisper, we suddenly heard crash, crash, among the bushes, about fifty yards in, then presently a deep whistling sound, "grizzly bar" whispered the Indian, "only grizzly make im that noise when eat im berries," anxiously we waited drawing the canoe close to the side opposite to where the bear was still tearing down the bushes with some ninety yards of bank exposed to view, crashing he went from one heavily laden branch to another, but he had apparently no further intention of revisiting the river, for after waiting with my heart in my mouth for about half an hour, we finally heard no more of him, and after paddling a little higher up, darkness soon forced us to return to camp. Probably the reader is thinking, that had he been in my place, he would have crept through the bushes to within shot; impossible: in the first place he could not have seen more than five yards in front, and secondly he would have made noise enough to scare a bear at a hundred yards distance. Except on the mountain tops there appear only two means of approaching game in these parts of British Columbia, namely, by water or over snow, naturally I felt little inclination to renew our journey on the morrow constantly haunted by the remembrance of that bear being still at large, and in close proximity. I, therefore, promised the Indians extra pay, and decided to spend the day up Bear River. Accordingly next morning L. and I, with two Indians, canoed as far as we could up

the little river, until our progress was arrested by a mass of drifted timber, the accumulation of years piled about twenty feet high, and covering some eighty square yards of river and land. Close here was a lake where we expected to find geese ; but on reaching its margin it unfortunately contained no water, only mud and swamp, we saw a few ducks and snipe, but the only thing affording a shot was a water-rail, all else would have fallen where I should have been obliged to have waded up to my neck in slush, a feat I did not feel justified in accomplishing in order to procure a solitary duck. We had come a good many miles up this small river, which was only about fifteen yards wide, and at two o'clock we commenced to drift slowly back expecting to sight one at least of the many bears whose fresh tracks we had passed in the morning, for from three till about five at this time of the year, bears are more or less on the roam ; however, we reached the Fraser at dusk, having seen no animal larger than a musk rat, and some geese at which I did not fire for fear of alarming a bear. On the following day being the sixth since leaving Fort George, towards evening we reached the cañon, which, the water being low, was as practicable as it ever is, though even in this stage it would be impossible to get a loaded canoe through, while in high water nothing would induce an Indian to attempt a passage either up or down, whether it would be possible for a canoe to live or no, I cannot say, but the risk would be considerable. The canoes were got through as soon as possible after our arrival, and the next day the things were replaced after being packed about half a mile ; the first to arrive on the spot, where the canoes had been hauled up on the previous evening, saw a caribou walking leisurely along a mud flat on the opposite side of the river, so hastening back to camp for his rifle, he was duly rewarded by the animal, most accommodatingly taking the water and swimming across to his hiding place where it was quickly despatched. After a few hasty repairs with an axe, for the canoes did not pass through entirely scathless, but received a few nasty scrapes and digs, we once more pushed forward. The country was now mountainous, though, until the day previous to reaching the cañon, it had appeared comparatively flat ; we could, however, form but a slight opinion of the surroundings, for I don't think we were ever able to penetrate the dense cloud of smoke caused by the enormous forest fires raging in all quarters, which had cast an impenetrable veil over the scenery for weeks, but now that we were fairly in the mountains, the smoke clouds appeared to have dispersed, presenting the usual picture of British Columbian scenery—mountains, mountains, and nothing but mountains.

CHAPTER XXII.

NEXT day failing to observe that one spot held any advantage over another except as regards a southerly aspect, I told the Indians to land us at the foot of a mountain reported to be in the possession of a great quantity of grizzly bears, and, on that account, rarely visited by Indians. At twelve o'clock, without a word from the steersman, our canoe was run ashore, and never, I should imagine, in the annals of house building was a site more speedily selected. There where the canoe struck the bank we dug the steps, and at the top of the steps we built the shanty.



OUR SHANTY ON THE FRASER RIVER.

At one o'clock the Indians commenced felling trees, for I agreed to retain them for a couple of days to do the heavy work. At about the same time it began to rain, and for the next two months we very rarely had two fine days consecutively. It seemed as though all the rain that might reasonably have fallen, between June and the present date, was let loose on us in these two months, for with the exception of two or three thunderstorms, scarcely a drop had fallen since June. Next evening, the rain having ceased for a little, I took a stroll up the river; it must not be supposed that I sauntered along with my rifle comfortably poised under my arm thoroughly enjoying an evening's walk on a smooth grassy bank. Nothing of the sort; when I was not gently dragging one leg after the other out of mud up to the knee, I was either in the water or clambering over fallen timber. After three quarters of an hour of this work, having placed about half-a-mile between myself and camp, I saw nearly a mile up the river, a fine black bear coming jauntily towards me, carefully scrambling some fifty yards nearer, I squatted in the mud behind a stump to wait, for had I gone further, I should have been too much exposed ere finding shelter, a gentle breeze was blowing straight in my face, and I felt confident of securing him. On he came, apparently full of fun; I scarcely supposed an elderly bear capable of such frolicksome gambols, constantly capering into the bushes beside the river, then out again on to the mud, ever drawing nearer, until at last, when within a hundred and fifty yards, I asked myself shall I fire now or wait for a certainty at a hundred? Prudence said, wait, and I followed her advice. At length he was almost within the hundred yards, and I gradually raised my rifle in position, but what demon whispered in the ear of my bear? for I had, I considered, every right to claim him. I believe I even saw his skin stretched out to dry, but without a second's hesitation, he turned sharply and clambered away among the bushes, being lost to view ere I could sight him. Disappointed, and totally at a loss to understand the cause of his sudden alarm, for alarmed he clearly had been, I hastily gained the edge of a creek a few yards in front of me, where I immediately discovered that the treacherous wind, as so often happens in this rugged country, was blowing in an exactly contrary direction, consequently on suddenly encountering this current, the bear had winded me. Well knowing, therefore, that further search was useless, I crossed the creek by means of a fallen tree and continued my rambles, until darkness showed signs of approaching, when I retraced my steps, and on again reaching the creek, by the greatest chance I saw something move about sixty yards up in the overhanging bushes. Pausing a moment, I beheld a bear stand on its hind legs, to reach down some berries. Taking a somewhat hasty and doubtful sight I fired. The bear, which was on the opposite side, immediately rushed down the bank and crossed the creek, disappearing in the tangled brush where I hurriedly followed, to find him breathing his last. Indeed, I was only attracted to the spot by the one ghastly, half growl, half groan, usually emitted by a dying bear. He was only a three-year-old, but consoled me much, for my previous loss; dragging him down to the creek, I placed a few bushes over the body, in such a position as to scare off any wolves. By this time it had become dusk, but before I had gone far on my homeward journey I was glad to see Fred with the canoe in the distance. L., having heard the shot, rather rashly I thought took it for granted, that there was a bear to be brought back, hence the opportune appearance of the canoe. We soon hoisted in our spoil, and quickly returned to camp, wildly calculating that from this early success, we should kill I don't

know how many more, ere the season closed, being without meat, hunger tempted me once more to try bear's flesh, and with pleasure I retract my former assertion that it was an insipid, undoubtedly black bear, if killed when in good condition, and rolling in fat is unsurpassed by the best butcher's meat, probably an ancient one would be tough and perhaps strong, but a two or three years old is excellent. L. and I quite agreed that we had never eaten nicer meat, though unfortunately we only made this discovery after having exchanged most of our first bear for part of the Indians' caribou. In two days the shell of our house was completed, and the Indians departed to fetch the remainder of our freight whenever it should arrive, leaving us monarchs of all we surveyed. Probably to those who have spent their lives in a comfortable abode, the completion of a house 25ft. by 20ft. such as we now possessed would seem a simple enough matter; true everything was simple, too simple in fact, the material simple solid fir trees and mud from the river, tools—two axes, one auger, 10lbs. of nails, a hammer, adze, handsaw and a double cross-cut saw, which refused to move in green timber, all these were simple enough; workmen two—one being very small, and the other equally indolent, constantly losing half-a-day or more by hunting, instead of working; under these circumstances, it is not very surprising, that the following took many weeks to complete, in spite of a certain amount of assistance from L., whose forte was stopping with moss, and mudding the chinks. Removing roots, and levelling floor, laying down the floor with small trees placed head and tails, and afterwards chopped down to their centres with the adze; fixing up partitions of small trees, so as to divide the shanty into three compartments; cutting windows and doors through solid green trees, fixing in the panes of glass, making doors out of slabs brought with us, front door four feet high, back door three feet two inches high, making rustic table and two chairs, collecting and carrying moss for stopping between logs and over roof, stopping and mudding all chinks, covering roof one-and-quarter feet deep with sand, no earth being procurable, and last, though by no means least a large fire-place to accommodate logs four feet long, built first of sediment, and afterwards of clay. Among these items only two real difficulties presented themselves, the first of which was the fire-place, not a stone lay within miles, it was therefore evident that a substitute would have to be relied on in the form of sediment from the river, this we made into bricks and baked, but they crumbled away at the slightest touch, at length after three days hard work, Fred carrying up the mud while I laid it on; a very imposing looking structure some five feet high was erected. After putting up the last dab for the day, I stood back to admire my handiwork, the most difficult portion the closing in preparatory to the erection of a chimney was completed; while thus wrapt in admiration, I beheld the whole mass slowly caving in, that last dab had done it, fool that I was not to have waited until the morrow, when it would have dried a little, rushing forward I clasped as much of my three days' labour as I could include in a tender embrace, but to no purpose, no one man could have kept that fire-place up, gradually but gracefully it fell, three days lost, and a sharp frost might come any night to prevent all further work with such materials, well, there was nothing for it but to pull down what remained standing, and re-commence the work with clay, some of which we had noticed on our way up the river, but it was a considerable distance off, and we should require several canoe loads, it was, however, the last resource, so off we started next morning, returning with as much of the finest blue clay as we dared load the canoe with, it answered admirably, and in about a week an excellent fireplace

was completed, the only fault being that the smoke declined to go up the chimney, at length after much coaxing and closing in with tin it only smoked a little and that not always, so that on the whole it was a satisfactory fireplace, but the other item, the roof, was ever a lamentable failure, in the first place the fall was insufficient, in the second there should have been a strong support running from end to end in the centre of the house to relieve the smaller trees composing the roof of a portion of the weight, for after piling on a foot and a half of sand, we dared throw up no more, the poles bending to an alarming extent. The first shower gave us an inkling of what we might expect when it rained, by quickly penetrating the porous sand, but when it really did rain, there was not a square foot unprovided with its own waterfall, the worst of it was that when it cleared up outside, it continued to rain two days more in doors, everything became mouldy, our blankets in spite of every precaution were constantly soaked, when the fire was lit in the day time, the whole place resembled a vapour bath, L. got rheumatic, the skins became mildewed, and everything that could spoil did so, had we even been able to procure earth it might have been better, every place we could think of was tried, the trees with the exception of birch would no longer bark, and that utterly declined to remain in any desired position, we covered it deep in spruce boughs, but they were worse than useless, to make shingles was out of the question, when finally I hit on an idea which I believed would successfully overcome the difficulty, off we set for more clay, a thin layer of which was spread over the entire roof, but a tremendous storm arose in the night and in the morning not a vestige of clay remained, this had been the expiring effort. We now could do no more than pray for the frost which was unusually late in coming, though it paid us a short visit on the 24th October by swooping down with 23 degrees for one night, and after a slight effort on the following, disappeared again in endless rains, these only ceased to give place to sleet and snow, which up to the end of November remained but for short intervals before melting. The frost being insufficient to admit of our standing on what remained of the muddy roof to remove the snow, it invariably filtered into the house. Thus being too busy to hunt, the bears escaped me for I saw none after the middle of October. L. and I had seized the opportunity of a fine day to make an expedition down the river, she being most anxious to shoot a bear. We therefore left Fred to work at the house during our absence, we saw nothing on the way down but a beaver, which swam close to the canoe, until becoming suddenly alarmed it disappeared with a mighty splash of the tail, to be seen no more. At dusk we camped, having taken nothing more than blankets and a calico wind shelter, to fix up for the night was a very simple proceeding, by the time the fire was started darkness had set in, and after a somewhat meagre supper we rolled ourselves in our blankets and were soon asleep. At daybreak on taking a hasty observation, the most important object in sight was a bear, about half-a-mile off on the opposite side of the river. In a very few minutes we were skimming along in the direction I had last seen him; leaving L. in the canoe, the water being too shallow to approach the land, I hastened knee-deep over a mud flat, and after creeping along the edge of some willow suddenly recognised the unmistakable crashing of the bushes, as the berries were being torn down for breakfast; but though I was within ten yards of the bear, it was some seven sufficiently minutes ere I could catch a glimpse of him. Finally he became exposed to warrant a shot, but by the time the smoke had cleared off, on

reaching the spot he had occupied, nothing resembling a dead bear could be seen, moreover, the wind was so high that not a sound of his movements had reached my ears. Plunging into the dense under-growth, for want of a clue to the direction he had taken, I soon lost all hope of ever finding him, the whole place being intersected with runs. Finally, although feeling certain that he was mortally wounded, I was forced to give up the search, though in all probability he lay dead within a hundred yards. Except for the smoke hanging I should have seen the direction he took, but not being able to ascertain whether he lay dying or no I lost several precious moments before entering the under-growth. On account of the absolute necessity of following on a wounded bear without delay nearly all the accidents which have occurred to Indians have been brought about, for they exhibit such impetuosity in this respect that they occasionally stumble right on to the animal without being aware of its close proxmity, in which event even a black bear becomes a formidable antagonist. L. having by this time waded out from the canoe and joined in the fruitless search, we decided the best thing to do was to return, therefore, much disgusted, we arrived at our last night's camp, packed our goods into the canoe, and commenced the somewhat wearisome business of towing it home, that being the only means by which we could make any satisfactory progress, for the canoe required at least three to paddle her properly. In a few hours we once more returned to our "shanty" empty-handed, but quite ready for breakfast, which we had felt no inclination to prepare for ourselves. A few days later I killed another small bear, every atom of which we devoured, save the actual bones and skin, which I wished to keep, Even the insides Fred found most savoury. I saw but one more, and that being on the wrong side of the river, had vanished by the time I had got the canoe and reached the spot. I had a snare set in a likely-looking trail. It was on an improved principle of my own invention, consisting of two nooses of wire rope, worked by heavy drops. One morning, on visiting this, I found I had caught a bear, at least, he had walked into the snare, apparently continuing his journey regardless of the damage done, both nooses being broken, with the stiff wire ends pointing towards me as though in derision, and I quickly came to the conclusion that the old orthodox Indian style was the best, I therefore set no more of my own invention, but stuck to the snare and pole principle in future. Let me here warn sportsmen against ever becoming the possessors of metal bear-traps. I do not mean to insinuate that when large enough they are not admirably adapted for catching and holding bears, but they are in various ways most undesirable; their weight is great, rendering them cumbersome to move about, an absent-minded person is as likely as not to step into his own trap, or there is always the greater chance of someone else doing so, hence they are extremely dangerous. The surest and most simple mode of trapping bears is with a noose manufactured from raw hide. It is easily carried in the pocket, and must be attached to a heavy pole, so poised that when sprung it partially lifts the animal from the ground and strangles it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MUCH to our relief two canoes shortly appeared with our provisions, &c.; but though they brought 50 lbs. of bacon and 24 lbs. of tinned meat, a quantity of things were still missing, which necessitated considerable extra expense by obliging us to have yet another canoe up, this when it finally arrived was nearly empty, except for 60 lbs. of coal oil instead of 200 lbs., 100 traps and a few other things, amongst which were mails eleven months old, together with a letter from Mr. Clifford, at the Forks, stating that one of the canoes containing our freight had been lost coming up the Skeena, amongst the various articles gone to the bottom, L. and I had each a special grievance, she by the loss of her riding habit, boots and only dress, under these circumstances she beheld herself compelled to return to Victoria a veritable squaw in a blanket, while I was considerably put out at the loss of implements without which I should be some 100 or more traps short, though I was duly thankful that 70 had been saved from the wreck. As a sort of compensation for the absence of many much needed articles, one of the few boxes brought by the last canoe on being opened was found to contain a melancholy collection of mostly broken china plates which did not belong to us, and had by some mistake been forwarded about 650 miles for our special benefit, how much the few unbroken plates had cost me I felt no inclination to figure out.

After a careful calculation we came to the conclusion that by using one instead of two lamps, and going to bed at eight o'clock, we might have oil enough for four months; the prospect was by no means cheerful, as it portended a very long time spent in bed, and even then should we fail to obtain the further supply, for which we had written to Mr. Ogden, the time must come when we should spend sixteen out of the twenty-four hours in darkness.

I had noticed with considerable regret, that after passing the cañon there was little or no signs of beavers, the quantities of houses I saw below had led me to anticipate a good catch; but as far round as I had been on what I now looked upon

as my private hunting grounds, I saw no spot worked by them since the spring, and in all probability I should have remained in ignorance for some time longer but for one of the two families of Indians, who, having been hunting 100 miles further up, forced their undesirable presence upon us by camping close to the shanty on their way back to Fort George.

These Indians on the day after their arrival, much to my indignation started off to set beaver traps on my manor, as to remonstrate would have been unadvisable, especially as they strongly object to having their beaver interfered with, I did the next best thing by accompanying one of the two parties in order to ascertain where the game was to be found. After a couple of hours' walk we arrived at a small lake, containing many varieties of ducks, some of which were so tame as to show no alarm on being approached to within twenty yards. The Indians appeared disappointed, there had evidently once been plenty of beavers there, but now only two houses showed signs of recent work, around these they set their traps and returned to camp, whilst I, as the only compensation for having my beavers destroyed in my actual presence, had learned where and how to set the traps.

The other party did not return till dark, I therefore concluded they must have had a long distance to go ere reaching the beaver dam.

On the following day the Indians, five in number, had arranged to show me the only pass by which an ascent up the Grizzly Bear Mountain could be accomplished, and which I rather despaired of ever finding by myself. They all seemed perfectly confident that we should see bears, or rather, that I should, for they declared their intention to hunt caribou, therefore in opposition to my previous determination of never again accompanying Indians on a hunting expedition, it was decided that I should go, one of the party agreeing to carry my blanket and waterproof sheet. We made an early start in the canoe, as far as the creek where I had killed the first bear, and there we struck into the timber by an almost imperceptible caribou trail, and in about three quarters of an hour we were ascending the mountain. All went smoothly enough for a few hours, when we reached the snow, the mountain at the same place assuming an almost perpendicular position, to scale this under the most favourable circumstances would have been no easy matter, but in its present state it bordered on the impossible, a thin layer of freshly fallen snow lightly covered last summer's rank and luxurious growth of grass, including in its midst flowers and plants, which by some mysterious transformation have found their way into English hothouses, while here in their native soil they thrive on the bleak mountain peaks, these now lay a smooth rotten slippery mass, upon which it was an utter impossibility for a moccasined foot to obtain even a momentary hold, such a sliding and slipping would have been entertaining enough to a looker on, but to those engaged in the ascent, it was regarded in a more serious light, at every step one lost yards of hardly contested ground, sometimes twenty yards at a slide, in which case but for the friendly assistance of an intervening tree, there was nothing to prevent the total loss of the previous half hour's labour, nor was this assistance, though earnestly needed, always rendered in a particularly gentle manner, as often as not the only means of ensuring a stoppage was by embracing a stump with one leg on either side of it, a feat vividly recalling the days of one's childhood, when on sliding down the banisters one was prematurely brought up by the knob at the bottom. At length thoroughly worn out and exhausted, I reached the summit, but after a short rest soon

felt freshened up again, we now proceeded along a narrow ridge of snow, a yawning abyss studded with sharp-pointed rocks on one side, and a gentle slope just sufficient to prevent the possibility of stopping one's self in the event of a slip, on the other. Truly, this was as nasty looking a place as I had as yet set eyes on, and I defy anyone to stand on that narrow slipping ridge without feeling a shudder pass through him, assuredly the grizzly bears had chosen a grizzly retreat. By-the-by, where were those bears? The Indians said, "too much snow bears in sticks," therefore, beyond having learned the trail, I had gained little, though we had seen in many places where the grizzlies had been rooting up the Indian potatoes, as a bulb peculiar to the mountains is called, this is much sought after by grizzlies, hence their special attraction to the locality. After proceeding about a mile over the summit, the Indians halted for dinner, they quickly came to the conclusion that there were no caribou about, and that they should return to camp that day, nor in the absence of the grizzlies was I sorry, for it was bitterly cold, and scarcely a stick of wood could be procured. After feeding they said, "Come on, we go look for caribou," I immediately followed, all were still slipping and falling about; but it appeared to me that the parts they fell on must have become as callous as their feet to the sharp pointed rocks, whereas every time I came down it was on some hidden projection which hurt indescribably, time pressed, and we clambered in hot haste to the top of the first peak, and then to my intense mortification, they started to run down the opposite side of the mountain we had lately had so much difficulty in ascending, running down in a foot of snow was easy enough; but the fact of having ultimately to retrace our steps weighed heavily on my mind, although the idea probably never entered theirs. After descending about a mile as ill luck would have it, they struck a fresh caribou track; away they went like a pack of hounds, while I, feeling like a water-logged vessel, endeavouring to keep pace with five revenue cutters, laboured heavily in their wake. On and on we went till happily they found a porcupine, the chasing and killing of which occupied time enough for me to gain a slight rest, then off they set again up another peak, while one as though not content with carrying his own weight actually dragged the porcupine, which must have weighed between 30 lbs. and 40 lbs., by a rope, for another mile or two over the snow. By this time they concluded that the caribou had gone too far and that it would be necessary to hurry up in order to accomplish the worst part of the descent before dark. This was precisely what I had foreseen, though I had buoyed myself up with the hope that they knew of some easier route home, by which we might avoid clambering up the mountain again, but no, we were obliged to return exactly as we had come. Whilst making that last ascent, I physically realised the feelings of those lost in the snow, finding myself utterly helpless without continual rests to drag one leg after the other. I could have accomplished the task well enough in my own time, but their pace was simply killing. At length I thought to find consolation in the distress of another, selecting therefore a lad of about 14 who had been running hither and thither all day like a dog, giving himself double the necessary amount of labour, I asked him if he was not tired, the lying little wretch replied "Nike halo cumtax,"—"I don't know what it is to be tired," this final blow broke what slight element of spirit remained in me, to be so ignominiously outdone by a wretched half-starved little wisp of a boy seemed too much, and I plodded on, trying to strengthen my aching legs by pressing straight with my hands my almost helpless knees. At length we reached the spot

where we had fed, and in a weak moment I desired the Indian to hang up my blanket and waterproof in the fork of a tree as I should return later on, for they had assured me that the present snow would melt before the regular winter commenced, and that I should then find the grizzlies up there; but the snow never did melt, and I had another fruitless journey after my blanket. By the time we made a fresh start but three quarters of an hour's daylight remained. The first stage of the descent was accomplished quickly enough, the only difficulty being in regulating the pace, no further troubles presented themselves until darkness set in, when they became innumerable.

I have no remembrance of ever having had occasion to say a good word for an Indian, but I am now willing to give him his dues and acknowledge his aptitude for sticking to a trail in the dark, in the present instance for the greater part of the way, I had been unable to distinguish in broad daylight the slightest sign of a trail, yet in almost pitch darkness these Indians, or rather he who went first, stuck to it until within an hour of the river, when we all became lost. After aimlessly wandering about for some time, apparently as a last resource they asked me if I could tell where the trail was, I said no, but I could by the aid of my compass point them out in which direction the river lay, therefore having struck a light and taken our bearings, back we started, for of course we had been travelling towards the east instead of the west, presently we crossed the trail which was instinctively recognised by the leading Indian. At this discovery they all seemed greatly relieved and sat down to light a fire. I enquired whether having regained the trail they intended to camp there, they only replied "we make im fire." Not being in the least cold, and most anxious to get home, I wished them and their fire elsewhere, but I soon picked up a wrinkle well worth the delay, each quickly provided himself with a stick two feet long, making a split in the end, into these they wedged the extremities of strips of birch bark leaving it in a loop at the top of the stick, these loops were filled with finely stripped bark and lighted, thus everyone was provided with an admirable torch, though out of pure wantonness they were unable to resist the temptation of firing the dead pines as they passed, which being heavily hung with long streamers of dry lichen readily ignited, flaring up to their very tops in a second, thereby jeopardising the surrounding country and rendering the immediate neighbourhood as light as day, and enabling us to regain the canoe without further difficulty except for one deep pool of water, into which each fell as he passed, though somewhat consoling himself for his ducking by crawling out as noiselessly as possible and waiting to enjoy the spectacle of seeing the next one plunge into the same hole. At length I reached home feeling more disgusted than ever for having again attempted the hopeless task of satisfactorily hunting in company with Indians. Next day the Indians went to take up their traps, but having learned what I desired to know I did not again accompany them. They returned with six of my beavers, and I was heartily glad to see the last of them on the morrow, when they all decamped stealing a rope and a frying pan which we failed to miss for some days.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I NOW made my first essay in beaver trapping, by setting five traps in the small lake. A beaver trap by the way, is an exceedingly formidable affair with two such powerful springs, that if one were handed to a novice with instructions to set it within half an hour without the aid of levers, I will undertake to say that at the expiration of the time, he would declare it to be an impossibility; however, after a little practice it becomes a comparatively easy matter. The result of my next visit to the traps, two days later, was to find a toe in one, three unsprung, and the fifth gone altogether; this was most annoying, for the loss was occasioned entirely through misplaced confidence in a book of instructions for beaver trapping, wherein it stated that on a beaver being caught, it invariably plunged into the water, fully relying on this statement, I had placed my pole in such a position, that when the captive took to the water it was certain to drown, but at the same time I noticed that should it act contrary to what the book described as their invariable practice, it would be just possible for it to drag the chain off the top of the pole, and this is what had evidently taken place; hence I lost my first beaver and trap. I afterwards caught four beavers in the lake, including the one which left me his toe on the former occasion; they had clearly been pretty closely hunted by the Indians, for three out of the four had been previously trapped, two having lost a foot each but in spite of their former connection with traps, I found them to be marvellously stupid animals, it not being necessary even to cover the traps over, except with water, though all scent of the hands must be obliterated. I next set traps where the second party of Indians had been, this place we found by tracking the Indians from the spot where they had landed, some two miles up the river, until we ran them down to a dam where there only appeared to be the remnants of a single family of beavers, out of which we caught two, though one escaped by twisting off a foot, a performance which, owing to their great weight of from 60 to 80 lbs., is rendered tolerably easy if the trap gets round any obstruction. In a few days, a severe frost froze up the water, and imagining that the winter had commenced, we chopped out and removed all the traps; nor did I think it worth while, when shortly after the frost broke up, to reset them again. I saw a fine pure white wolf one day, hunting about after a beaver I had hung up, but a shot at 100 yards failed to secure it. Beavers of one or two years old we found the best eating, but after three years, at which age they are a little more than half grown, they become tough; for five weeks we lived entirely on their flesh; the tail is composed of a firm and peculiar description of fat, delicately flavoured, but exceedingly rich, and the entire animal if par-boiled and roasted, is excellent. Should the reader ever become possessed of a live or dead beaver, I would strongly advise him to keep it far away from his abode, as at certain seasons they swarm with a most repulsive looking parasite, similar to a bug in appearance, only much larger, some being a quarter of an inch long, of a light mahogany colour, and very fast. Unaware of the existence of these loathsome creatures, I brought all the beavers into the shanty with the result that for six weeks we were over run with these vermin, which seemed quite at home in our beds and elsewhere; they simply

gave L. and myself the horrors, and a considerable portion of our nights were spent in more or less successful hunts. Musk rats are also infested with the same things, and indeed, all the fur bearing animals I came across, seemed to possess some parasite irrespective of fleas. As far as I could perceive, the only game in our locality were woodland caribou, or American reindeer, though I

Woodland Caribou.

had been led to anticipate goats, probably sheep, and certainly moose. A moose head I picked up, but they only existed in numbers 100 miles further on up the river. We received no more visitors, with the exception of a second family of Indians returning to Fort George, who only tarried a few minutes, informing us that they were the last left on the river, therefore, hereafter we had the entire space to ourselves—the nearest Indians being 120 miles distant, and no white man within some 300 miles. There appears no inclination on the part of an Indian to put by for the future, he lives entirely for the present; and though he could with ease treble the sums he receives for skins, he is perfectly content to return to his village, immediately on having collected sufficient to provide him with his winter's requirements. Beavers being the easiest to obtain and the most valuable, were the only fur bearing animals sought by the Indians in this district, with the natural result that they were being rapidly exterminated. During the whole year they spent no more than three or four months hunting, including that period in the spring when the snow is sufficiently crusted to enable them to run the caribou, by which means whole bands, numbering sometimes as many as 30, are destroyed in a day; when killed in this fashion, the meat I was told, is most unpalatable. Our minds had lately been considerably relieved, by having received some oil from Mr. Ogden, together with

L.'s dress, which though seriously damaged, had been by some means rescued from the Skeena; but our tinned meat and other things had been stolen by the Skeena Indians on Babine Portage. We saw no white men after the fall, when some miners returned from the head waters where, as usual, they had been unsuccessful, though report had it, that huge fortunes were being realised by them.

The margin which separates the miner from the gambler appears to me of the narrowest dimensions, the object of each is the same, the excitement in obtaining it equal, the risks and hardships of the former are infinitely greater, but compensated by the fact, that when he does make a haul, he robs only mother earth, though when after his summers toil he freely squanders the result of his luck, who could at that time distinguish the miner from the gambler; 'tis "easy come, easy go" with both. I have never met a miner, who at the close of a winter was a dollar better off than the first day he went prospecting. Few who have stuck to the business have not, at some period, struck on a good thing and made their pile, yet should their next season prove unproductive, they find themselves not only penniless but heavily in debt, for with true gamblers' instinct they have anticipated future luck, which as usual plays them false. Doubtless there are exceptions, but they must be rare, nearly all I encountered gave the same account of themselves—"made hundreds of dollars one summer and spent them all in one winter's carouse and jollification." Few in the outside world realize the perils unhesitatingly encountered, principally in unnavigable waters, by the miners of this country, who struck me as being well informed, and most agreeable chance acquaintances, far removed from the ruffianly lot they are usually represented to be.

CHAPTER XXV.

LITTLE worthy of record transpired before November, when we began trapping, unless it be that I commenced to build a smaller canoe, that is to say, Fred cut down two cotton trees for me to operate on, but finding both hollow I gave up the idea.

During the greater part of November the weather was I should imagine unusually mild, and terribly wet, especially indoors, scarcely any frost appeared until the end of the month, when the river froze up, and no snow lay permanently until the 30th, by which time we exhibited a constant craving for meat.

I had had but one chance of obtaining a Caribou, which had not been brought off successfully, while ruffed grouse were scarce, and the dusky grouse though plentiful enough on our first arrival appeared to have migrated; another thing against bagging many of these was the prohibited discharge of a rifle except at big game in order to keep all quiet, thus those procured were killed either with catapult or saloon pistol, both of which weapons proved exceedingly handy and fairly productive. During this month we had some 100 traps set, with a reserve of about 70 more, and our bag from the time of leaving Fort George up to November 30th amounted to 71 head of fur, including 29 marten, 21 ermine, 7 minks, 2 wolverine, 1 fisher, 6 beavers, 3 musk rats, 2 bears, 40 grouse, 3 geese and a few ducks. This as a first essay in trapping, I considered a fair success, though disappointed by the absence of fisher and wolverine, while the other larger animals I scarcely expected to see

until the deep snow should have driven them from the mountains; feeling justified in taking the above as an estimate of what the coming season would produce, I figured out a very pretty list as the probable result of the winter's campaign, but I little knew what a formidable enemy I should have to contend against. As the snow increased, all the smaller animals decreased, until finally by the end of December not a marten or mink track was to be seen, all were snugly housed beneath the snow, where, under the fallen timber, they could spend a comfortable winter, with a larder always well-stocked with a varied assortment of mice; an occasional ermine appeared the only small thing which ever sought the surface, nor with the increase of snow on the mountains did the wolves and wolverine put in an appearance as I had anticipated, in fact I believe that in December only three wolves visited our neighbourhood at all, and these were so wary that they even declined to touch a stray piece of bait dropped on the trail as an inducement to further investigations in the regions of a trap, which they walked round and round never approaching within two yards of the fatal spot. Wolves and foxes seem to have a keener sense of smell than any other animal I have come across, and to successfully trap them all scent of iron must be hidden, either by fumigation or by covering the trap and chain with blood or melted beeswax, a tedious business in any case, but in an undetected trap, unless set under water, neither are likely to be caught. Throughout this month of December, quantities of fresh caribou tracks could be seen in all directions. I seldom went out without at some period of the day crossing a fresh trail, which, if I had plenty of daylight before me I invariably followed, though, on such occasions they usually appeared to have started on at least a twenty-four hours expedition, which necessitated my relinquishing the chase with a long and weary trudge home, excepting once when but for a piece of bad luck I should have obtained a shot, in a wood I had almost circumvented, ere finding the fresh tracks which led into it. I therefore knew that my quarry was not far off and started on their trail, until the time arrived when being evidently close upon their heels, I every moment expected to view them while they were quietly strolling hither and thither, selecting each temptingly moss bedecked tree, from which to snatch a mouthful of long flowing lichen, when suddenly as ill luck would have it, they came on my former trail: then wild confusion appeared to have taken possession of them, and I saw by the snow that they had broken back into the wood in a disorderly gallop. I still followed, with but little hope now of success. Five times I drove them up to the trail, on each occasion, they rushed back into the thick timber, becoming more and more alarmed, for neither moose or caribou will voluntarily cross a fresh snow shoe trail. Finally perceiving that this game would last just as long as I could keep it up, I reluctantly gave in, leaving them to make their exit at their leisure, or as soon as they struck that portion of the wood which I had not surrounded with the dreaded trail. All these weeks we had been without fresh food, and our original stock of 50 lbs. of bacon was nearly exhausted, but there was no remedy, caribou I knew abounded in all directions, but without a little luck I was helpless to secure one. In an open country there would have been slight difficulty, but here it was rarely that one could see forty yards ahead, while the crunching of the snow entirely prevented so close an approach undetected. I noticed that when caribou are peacefully walking, their stride is exactly in accordance with that of a man, so that by stepping in the holes made by their feet, of course without snow shoes no extra exertion is required, but directly

they run, on which occasions they would probably have become alarmed, the distance between the holes is such that each stride becomes an effort; in fact, one can only just reach from one hole to the other; they are then going at their greatest speed. Their gallop is easily detected but seldom indulged in, at all events in heavy snow. It is also remarkable to what a nicety each animal places its feet exactly in the tracks of its predecessor, so that to form a definite conclusion as to what their numbers may be, from two to thirty is an impossibility except when they break the line for feeding or for loitering about. Towards the end of the month a few ptarmigan descended from the mountains, selecting as their resorts the river banks and willow covered flats where an occasional one was to be seen. I also came across some moose tracks on a swamp. On the night of the 30th, when the thermometer for the first time fell to 20 below zero, and throughout the following day a pitched battle appeared to be raging in every quarter, such a phenomenon is common enough in these regions, but none who have not experienced it, could realize the peculiar position of being surrounded by an invisible foe, armed mostly with revolvers, though in many instances, the report of a heavily-charged rifle might be distinguished. Firing commenced at dusk, and for the first twelve hours, was maintained at the rate of seventy shots a minute, and in every direction, only varied by occasional heavier reports, as some phantom monster delivered his fire. Well can I imagine any uninitiated persons being at their wits end to account for so uncanny an assault, but having experienced it on several occasions before, it scarcely came as a surprise, though I had no idea that it could be so increased as at the present time when almost every tree, for miles and miles must have contributed one or more shots, or rather splits, for on close inspection, huge cracks, extending from twenty feet, and in some cases the entire length up their massive trunks were clearly perceptible, sometimes the tree seemed almost burst in two; imagine then the havoc such a night creates among timber, which luckily is too remote to be of service to anyone, and imagine, too, if you can, the feelings of the caribou, unless nature has endowed them with an instinct, which can discriminate between an artificial and a natural explosion, they must have spent twenty-four hours of intense alarm; flight, their natural resource in times of danger being of no avail, for where were they to seek shelter when thus surrounded by such active skirmishers, unless they gained the untimbered regions on the mountain tops, or possibly, tranquility may have reigned on the higher ground where, owing to severe cold the trees might have waged their war some days earlier, however this may have been, I had no reason to suppose that that noisy night and day drove any of the caribou out of the valley, and afterwards but few trees appeared to possess any fresh place to crack in, though forty below zero found out an occasional weak point much later on.

A serious falling off in the trapping proceeds will be observed, for on the total being added up, it but raised the entire bag to one hundred head, by the addition of thirteen martens, eleven ermine, one skunk, one lynx, and three little owls caught in the traps, but not included in the list of fur; one wolverine Fred lost trap and all, by careless setting. An occasional lynx track was the only indication of future sport, though strangely enough, lynxes, were about the only animals which the Indians had not told us we should find plentiful, indeed they declared there were none, giving a further proof, if one were needed, of the amount of reliance to be placed on Indian information.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WITH the advent of the new year, 1888, severe weather set in, soon accustoming us to imagine that anything less than ten below zero was comfortably mild, the snow was as constant and deep as could be desired, but alas it registered on its surface, none of those indentations which go so far to cheer and encourage the hunter, only the safely secreted caribou and now and then a stray lynx, left the impressions of their passing visits, nor were my hopes of future success much strengthened, when two Indians arrived with our mail from Quesnelle, for they reported "plenty animals below cañon you too far up, none here," once more I realized that not only had I been forced to select an indifferent country, but I had again been located in the worst part of it, whether designedly or no on the part of the Indians I had no means of satisfying myself, but it certainly looked remarkably like it; these two, though they were the same who had stopped here to hunt on their way down in the fall, had refrained from hinting at this somewhat important fact then, but considered it quite safe to do so now that we had become fixtures, probably inwardly chuckling at my discomfiture. It had taken them seven days to walk from Fort George, and they set out on their return journey the following day after delivering our letters. A terribly heavy trail they must have found it too, owing to a considerable fall of snow which had taken place during the time they were with us.

Sport in British Columbia, at least such as we encountered, was not calculated to increase the sportman's ardour, in fact, so depressing an effect had the numerous obstructions on Fred, that although I had imagined he would eagerly seize on every available opportunity to hunt, and had given him carte blanche to take a rifle and try his luck whenever he chose to do so, yet he never once availed himself of the privilege, rarely even troubling to carry one while visiting his traps. Such want of zeal in a person brought up to the life of a gamekeeper seemed to me incredible: not, but that he was quite justified in avoiding the perfectly useless trouble of weighing himself down with any extra incumbrance, for though he was entirely ignorant of the fact, for two excellent reasons the prospect of his ever obtaining a shot was of the remotest; in the first place, his dread of being lost in spite of the possession of a compass, which was beyond the powers of his comprehension to utilize, confined him when alone either to his own or some other trail from which he never once diverged, thereby entirely debarring himself from following up a fresh caribou trail; in the second place, while walking he rarely raised his eyes from the region of his toes, an unfortunate habit, originating, I believe, in the once accidental discovery of a half-sovereign. Times out of number, have I seen him run full-butt into an overhanging tree, and if ever, when in his company, I happened to pull up short, I was usually rammed in the back by his head; verily I believe that had chance thrown a quarrelsome grizzly bent on disputing the right of way in his trail, his first and only intimation of the fact, before being torn in shreds, would have been the impression that he had butted into a rather softer and more mossy tree than usual; under these circumstances in connection with the marvellous amount of noise and bustle attending his every

movement, he was neither a desirable hunting attendant, nor a likely person to procure meat for a bacon sick outfit. As, therefore, I never gave him a direct order to go out and hunt, and he was not keen enough to do so on his own account, the spare rifle

I used frequently to lose Fred.

remained unused, for the heavy walking and general obstructions irrevocably prevented L. from placing any considerable distance between herself and home, though, for the

matter of that, caribou might constantly have been shot from within doors at a distance of from 50 to 100 yards, had anyone happened to have been looking out at the right moment. Wolves even once during my absence came up to within ten yards of the door in the day time, but were only observed when too late, and out of shot.

The 15th of January proved a day of considerable importance to us, for on that date, thanks to the successful hunting of two lynxes, we were provided with the first fresh meat we had tasted, with the exception of ten brace of grouse, since the 22nd of October, though the supply of these birds had so fallen off lately that during the last two months of this scanty fare we had only had five of them; however, as the circumstances under which we obtained this windfall were of a peculiar nature, I feel justified in recounting how on the 15th of January, it being a somewhat milder day than usual, about 10 below zero, I sent Fred up the river to visit my traps, while I proceeded to a swamp where I had some beaver traps set under the ice; after chopping through ice over a foot in thickness my labours proved unsuccessful, for the water was so shallow that I had been unable to set and bait the traps properly. Fred however after proceeding about three miles up the river, had come suddenly on a three year old caribou lying on the snow, with a lynx sitting a short way off, evidently on guard. Seeing Fred approach, the lynx quietly trotted up to within eight or nine yards of him, wondering no doubt what manner of human being it could be who came to hunt in British Columbia, but disdained to carry a rifle; however, having arrived at the conclusion that he must be harmless, it leisurely lumbered off again after the quaint fashion of lynxes. Fred then approached the caribou, which, though it rose to its feet, was powerless to move more than a few steps, allowing him to come within ten yards. He now dragged his revolver from his pocket, for though he saw no necessity to carry a rifle, yet he seldom stirred without this useless weapon. Shooting soon commenced, resulting in three misfires and two harmless explosions. I can only conclude that Fred determined to obtain all the sport possible out of this unlooked for opportunity, for instead of terminating the caribou's existence with his knife, he started off on a six miles jaunt to fetch a rifle, and on his return, finding everything just as he had left it, he once more took up his position at ten paces and commenced operations. The first shot, according to his own account, went off before he was ready; but at the conclusion of the fourth round he stood in the proud position of having killed the caribou. After this description of his success, I came to the conclusion that he was more than ever justified in saving himself the trouble of carrying so useless an encumbrance as a rifle. The caribou, on examination, proved to have been seriously mauled by the two lynxes, for Fred had seen a second in the distance, each having removed an ample meal, from two large holes in the neck and back. It looked very much as though they must have sprung on to the poor beast, gnawing and scratching out the flesh, as he sped in terror with his terrible burden, until he finally fell, bleeding and exhausted, in the snow. I came to this conclusion, because owing to the heavy state of the top snow, I thought it impossible for a lynx to fairly run down a caribou, though clearly this was no novel proceeding on their parts, for I had frequently before observed by the trails that caribou were being followed by one or more lynxes, though until now I never supposed them capable of such destruction. One of these destroyers suffered the penalty for its success two days afterwards, when it returned for supper, but the second escaped; and perhaps I was scarcely justified in seeking the skins of our benefactors. There is little difficulty in trapping or

snaring a lynx, which places its great woolly paw into the very centre of the trap, without the slightest suspicion of danger; nor when thus caught does it make much effort to free itself. But I should advise any person who finds one in such a predicament to be cautious how he approaches, or he will probably carry away painful reminiscences of the first lynx he caught. It treats a snare with even more indifference than a trap, for about the former there is no attempt at deception, the fatal string noose is pegged open with twigs in the most perceptible manner; yet this foolish, great stumpy-tailed cat thrusts its handsome head with its beautifully tipped ears straight into the deadly circle, being instantly hoisted high in the air, there to hang until death ensues.

I doubt if a caribou was ever made so much, or rather, more correctly speaking, so little of before; save the skin, entrails, bones, and hoofs, every particle was devoured by us, and considerably the better we felt for it. L., who had previously become seriously ill, quickly commenced to regain her health. I myself felt stronger, and doubtless Fred did the same, the only question was, when should we obtain another? Never, certainly, so far as Fred was concerned, for his recent piece of luck totally failed to convince him of the advisability of carrying a rifle, and only a few days later he walked into three caribous, which were so perfectly unconcerned that they simply trotted on to an open space within 150 yards, and stood there looking at him; nor had they moved from the spot when he repassed them on his way home. Next day, confident of finding them in the same place, he took a rifle and started on a fool's errand. Needless to say his journey was unsuccessful.

Shortly after this, when returning from up the river, two caribous galloped down the bank about three-quarters of a mile ahead of me, evidently in a desperate hurry over something. Finally, after pacing hither and thither, they re-ascended the bank half-a-mile further down. On arriving at the spot where they had disappeared I discovered that during my absence a large band had struck my trail, and becoming alarmed, had turned into the timber. These two must have been left behind, and were making up for lost time. It is not often one has to reproach oneself for getting up too early, but had I been later that morning I should have stood a good chance of coming on the whole band, which, but for striking my trail, would probably have continued their course down the river.

Towards the end of January the previously hard weather suddenly collapsed, giving place to so lengthened a thaw that for six days we were unable to move from the shanty.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IT was at rare intervals that I spent a day in the shanty, the programme usually ran as follows: Alarum set for three quarters of an hour before daybreak; breakfast as soon as possible, consisting of fried bacon as long as it lasted, and a plate of porridge, then out on to the river with the thermometer standing somewhere in the region of 15 below zero. As to dress, I found it best to be guided by the appearance of the elements. Should there be little wind with the thermometer no lower than as stated, one pair of breeches, rather threadbare, but lined with thin

flannel, proved sufficiently warm, especially if any fresh snow had either fallen or blown over the trail. A superfluity of clothing I found extremely exhausting, though, in the event of much wind or additional cold, I added a pair of moose-skin breeches; for the rest, two heavy flannel shirts, covered by a moose-skin shirt, kept my body perfectly warm; a fur cap, with ear-flaps, performed a similar office for my head; while on my hands I wore a pair of closely knitted woollen gloves, covered by moose-skin fingerless gloves; my feet and legs were encased in thick woollen socks, with woollen stockings drawn over them, these again covered with blanket socks and a pair of moose-skin moccasins completed an outfit which I found most satisfactory for hard or heavy walking, though totally inadequate for loitering about in. For should one desire to remain stationary for any period exceeding ten minutes a fire is absolutely necessary, without which no reasonable amount of wraps will retain sufficient heat on a really cold day. I found much comfort in a ten months' growth of hair, without which extra head-gear would have been necessary; having thus arrayed myself, slinging my rifle over my back, and catching up my staff and bag of bait, I would start out to visit a certain line of traps or to hunt caribou. Frequently the stars were still shining, at all events, it would be some four or five hours ere the sun put in an appearance, and when it did, it seemed so disgusted with the look of things in general, that it simply skimmed the horizon, quickly disappearing again without imparting either heat or cheer to the chilly mortals beneath. After half an hour's walk icicles commenced to form round my mouth, rapidly increasing, until my nose rested on a small block of ice extending about an inch and a half out from the lip, by this time to eat a crumb of biscuit, or to introduce the stem of a pipe would have been an impossibility. Thus, after leaving home, I was never able to take any food or indulge in a smoke. What weight of ice a man rejoicing in a heavy moustache and beard would be compelled to carry can scarcely be imagined; but judging from the limited growth on my own face it would be something very considerable. On cold, windy days after blinking my eyes the upper and lower lashes frequently became so firmly frozen together as to necessitate the application of a warm hand to free them; my nose, too, though disproportionately small caused me as much, or I should say, decidedly more anxiety in these frigid regions than it had hitherto done under scorching suns, I was never certain of it, being constantly obliged to feel with my hand to ascertain if it was going on satisfactorily, until one day while setting beaver traps under the ice, a by no means warm occupation, which usually renders one more or less an icicle, my nose after having demanded constant attention, entirely disappeared so far as feeling went, and on applying to Fred, who happened to be with me, as to its appearance, he quickly relieved me of all doubt by exclaiming, "Lor, its quite white." With ghastly visions of the noseless monstrosities occasionally encountered exhibiting their charms in the streets, I frantically applied snow to what felt like a small fir cone; with such vigour and success did I rub that I returned home with it in good circulation, though skinless and blistered: for several days I could not endure the least cold on it, being forced to devise a little bag in which in future I secured it against further risks. In relating this incident I have rather diverged from my daily programme, for frost bites did not fortunately occur so frequently, though we lost several toe nails and small bits of ears at different times. These members, together with the hands, required to be well looked after, or they became frozen without giving the slightest warning, and should

not their state be quickly discovered, it becomes a matter for amputation. My lines of traps extended only so far as would enable me to reach the last trap, and return the same day, but after snow or wind I found the journey more than I could manage, for trail breaking is remarkably fatiguing, while the low living and total absence of meat seemed to weaken my legs. Thus, on reaching home I was frequently pretty well used up, and with a sigh of relief sank into the most rustic of chairs, holding my ice-bound face to the fire for ten minutes to thaw, preparatory to dinner, which usually consisted of bacon again, if there was any, with the best delicacy L. could devise in the way of a sweet to follow. I omitted to mention how I packed home the animals caught, because as a matter of fact, I never did pack them, considering their capture quite sufficient, I therefore left that unenviable task for Fred to perform on some future occasion, considering the weight of clothes, rifle, etc., together with a bag of carcases for bait, a sufficient burden to have supported about all day. After dinner, on account of being compelled to turn in at an unheard of hour, owing to the limited supply of lamp oil, the short interval was devoted to skinning and stretching, which occupation proved by no means so regular as I should have desired. Thus, each day sped, and even weeks appeared to fly, so fully was my time engaged.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOR some weeks past L.'s daily solitude had been somewhat enlivened by the noisy presence of a blue jay, which she had occupied her spare time in trapping under the canteen cover, for the first three days we tethered it by the leg, but by the end of that time it had become sufficiently tame to be set at liberty, when its previously incessant screaming was varied by an exact imitation—if imitation it were—of the call of a northern diver; but what was our surprise when one day after squeaking like an unoiled wheelbarrow, it broke out into a lengthened and cheery song, by no means disagreeable though strained and unnatural, most of the notes being produced with an effort from the depths of the throat, however it sang daily, more and more, and there was something comical, too, about the song, it seemed to belong to a bird the size of a golden crested wren, being totally unfitted for anything so large as a blue jay, it was, however, their ordinary song, and but for this demonstration I should in all probability have failed to connect it, if heard out of doors, with the rightful owner; it seemed perfectly reconciled to its quarters, seldom leaving its assigned perch in the roof, except to forage up and down the cracks in the floor, in which it discovered dainties far superior to the food which we gave it, during these expeditions it ever proved the greatest source of attraction to the cat, which might constantly be seen stealthily sneaking behind a box, there to crouch with jaws parted and jibbering with pent up excitement, watching until the jay should work its way down the adjacent crevice; but not a bit of it, that bird knew the cat was there as well as though it were the other side of the box itself, wherever it happened to be looking it always had one eye on puss, whose occasional futile springs simply evoked indignant screams from the bird as it flew to its perch of safety. Though the door was constantly left open the jay seemed in no way inclined to regain its freedom,

until the thaw commenced when it began to show signs of restlessness, and finally quietly hopped outside and perched screaming on a tree; this jay was evidently no fool, it knew that with the thermometer 40° below zero, the warm shanty with plenty to eat was good enough, but that in genial weather outside was the place where it preferred to be.

I frequently saw it about afterwards and heard it muttering its tiny song, but civilisation had no further charms for it now, though it seemed to regard the neighbourhood as its home. I often wondered in the hard weather what became of all the birds, and even, to a certain extent, of the small animals as well, they could not have migrated, for on the first mild day the birds were to be seen in numbers: but during the intense cold, when I should have thought hunger would have tempted them to the spot, where they knew scraps were to be found, it was quite the exception to see them, while as regards grouse, especially the dusky grouse, I have passed perhaps a month of hard weather without seeing one; but on the first mild day I have found as many as seven; where, then, they passed their time during the intense cold, unless in the tree tops, remains a mystery to me, for unlike the other species I never knew them to seek shelter under the snow.

Frequently, during bright moonlight, the birds and squirrels seemed to have mistaken night for day. The jays screamed and squirrels ran about as merrily as in sunshine.

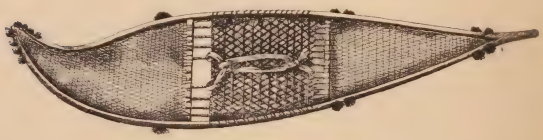
At the close of January a glance suffices to reckon up the bag—two lynxes, five ermine, one caribou, two grouse. Truly the trapping proceeds were rapidly declining, though I somewhat consoled myself with the remembrance of having heard several professional trappers declare that they did not consider it worth while to follow their vocation in the dead of winter. I gave little attention to their statements at the time, but their words, as I recalled them, afforded me at least the satisfaction of knowing that I was only experiencing what others had done before, and that in the future I should not consider it worth while to put up with the severity and hardships of winter for such small results, though I felt no regret at purchasing my experience, except so far as the inferiority of the country was concerned, that was an ever present source of vexation. Early in February we suffered a sad breavement in the loss of our cat. Its all very well to laugh, but in a lone land, hundreds of miles from anywhere, a cat is a cat; anyhow, it was L.'s only companion since the jay absconded, and during my daily absence she seemed to miss it sadly, besides being hourly haunted by the possible miseries befalling the lost wanderer; for it had happened that for some mysterious reason puss had seen fit one morning to accompany me about two miles from the shanty, and having accomplished probably the longest walk of her life, she sat down to miew, where I left her, never dreaming but that, as there was a slight snow-shoe trail over the snow, she would trot back home when so inclined; but on my return in the evening L.'s first inquiry was if I had seen the cat. Constantly throughout the night we would fancy we heard her scratching at the door, but it was only the mice which, relieved from her vigil, were indulging in an extra loud nibble at something good. No cat turned up, and the following day I tramped over a considerable portion of British Columbia, calling "puss, puss," like some wandering idiot, but no response being given I was forced to return, totally incapable of doing more than await results, for the snow was so hard as to afford no clue to her whereabouts. One more night passed and still no cat appeared.

Snow commenced to fall, never ceasing throughout the day and night following. The fourth day of pussy's absence broke with a clear sky and fifteen inches of fresh snow. In such a depth it seemed that, even if still alive, she was inevitably doomed: but when within a short distance of where I originally left her I came suddenly on an almost snowed-up trail. This I followed until it developed into fresh tracks, when finally a ghastly and agonised scream attracted my eyes to the roots of a pine where right inside a marten house erected over one of my traps stood the terrified cat, stiff and bristling with fear, she never stirred, and I never doubted but that she was caught in the trap, which I believe was unset, and, on nearer approach, I was relieved to find it was so, until I lifted her up she seemed unable to realize that I was not some monstrous demon of the woods, then she clambered on to my shoulder and curled tightly round my neck, clinging close to my shirt, while uttering such piteous cries as would have moved a stone, she had evidently received a shock the previous night, having narrowly escaped the jaws of a lynx or wolf, the faint tracks of which were clearly perceptible in all directions. There was much rejoicing in the shanty when I handed in the lost wanderer, looking thin and tucked up; all her misdeeds, such as clambering on to everything where she had no business, and bringing live mice from outside only to let them escape indoors, were forgiven her, and a hearty breakfast soon provided, but her appetite was poor, while she miewed incessantly for the next two days, by which time her escapade became forgotten.

The thaw in which the month commenced continued with few intermissions throughout its 28 days; the roof melted, and the rain poured through worse than ever, traps were first flooded and then frozen day after day. A wolverine, on being caught in one of Fred's traps, gnawed off the tree to which the chain was fastened, and escaped with a large beaver trap, finally falling with it into a creek, where all further trace was lost; and the only animal we succeeded in getting during this most unsatisfactory of all winter's months was another wolverine, these I had always heard, owing to their crafty natures, were almost impossible to catch in traps. How such an idea became general I cannot imagine, except that the Indians' dead falls being too small for them to get their heads into, they naturally scratch a hole through the back to get at the bait, which seems to strike an Indian as marvellously cunning, but with us, whenever one was about, it lost no time in getting caught, and we took four in No. 2½ traps, set for marten, which does great credit to a trap no larger than those commonly used in England for catching rats, a wolverine being, I fancy, about the strongest animal for its size existing, and weighing about 34 lbs.

L. enjoyed the best sport for this month, capturing six jays, including the old original, which was in future tethered by a string, while the others were imprisoned in a spacious and most rustic cage. The first jay still continued its miniature song, but none of the others contributed otherwise than to render the shanty like a small Jamrach's or parrot house at the Zoo, their whole time being occupied in screeching at the cat whenever she looked towards them. Quaint objects they appeared too, for, having clipped off their tails in order to keep them cleaner, they much resembled magnified wrens. They soon took resignedly to their prison life, little anticipating that their future freedom was intended to take place many thousands of miles distant in England.

Such a determined and prolonged thaw as had taken place during the entire month of February must have been a very rare occurrence in these climes. One day's



flapping about in the sodden snow proved more destructive to our snow shoes than two weeks of ordinary wear and tear, and the small supply of very indifferent filling, which was the best we could procure, had long since been used up in repairs, and every available morsel of hide was eagerly seized on for patching up the scantily filled frames upon which we were entirely dependent for locomotion, with the result that, though they lost in beauty, they gained considerably in weight, until they finally became sufficiently heavy to tire even an Indian.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARCH commenced with the apparent intention of atoning as far as possible for the solar deficiencies of its predecessor by a run of nine days of keen clear atmosphere and cloudless skies, such as one seeks on the Riviera. Days like these invariably awoke in me distant visions of Monte Carlo in the month of January, though perhaps the Casino stood out from the mental picture in somewhat too bold relief for perfectly peaceful recollections, though I had but to banish memories, and gaze on the surroundings to enjoy scenery as wild as that around the little Principality on the Mediterranean, somewhat over-done here in the way of snow certainly, and lacking such tropical trees as palms, etc., but the clear bracing air felt similar, and the bright sky seemed every bit as blue, while a judicious clearing off of some ten feet of snow would have revealed the sides of rocky mountains in every way superior to those of the sunny South. Weather, such as this, should have been

no exception during the long winter of these parts, at least, according to all accounts; but somehow it seemed a remarkable fact that we appeared to have struck British Columbia at the very moment when every customary luxury was for the first time within the memory of its inhabitants, not only conspicuous by its absence, but replaced by something else most undesirable. Nor were these remarkable displacements restricted to luxuries alone, the very elements of existence appeared thrown out of gear, food, animals, birds, and fishes disappeared as though by magic. Rivers flooded at unprecedented times; rain fell at a period when it had never done so before; instead of the thermometer registering 60° below zero, as it was reported to do constantly, it never fell beyond 42° below. Tea, which when poured out boiling, we were assured, would freeze in the cups before we could raise it to our lips, actually scalded us when the attempt was made, while the man whose wife told us, he had one cold day inadvertently seated himself on a red hot stove without being in anyway inconvenienced by the heat, would assuredly have scorched his legs before our homely fire. The brave, handsome, and noble red man impressed us as being a cowardly, hideous, and ignoble semi-black scamp. Graceful birch bark canoes artistically painted and decorated, presented the appearance of cotton wood logs indifferently hollowed and shaped into boats. The delicious salmon of British Columbia, if salmon at all, were scarcely fit to eat, while a pleasant day's boating resolved itself into tugging, hauling, and pulling an unweildy canoe over hedges and ditches of seething water, an immersion in which would have inevitably proved fatal. Beautiful summer weather was rendered unendurable by flies and mosquitoes, while a host of details, too numerous to mention, proved, metaphorically speaking, of the dullest black instead of the glowing colours in which strangers had represented them. In fact, take it all in all, British Columbia was not what it was said to be, and least of all by those who lived there. As a country for future development in agriculture, it may doubtless prove invaluable, at least, such parts as I have seen, that is if the rising generation of farmers can see their way clearly to ploughing the sides of rocky precipices, converting unfathomable quagmires into arable land, or utilizing the small remaining spaces of level ground at present interlaced with huge pine roots deeply imbedded in sand; but failing to overcome these, to my mind rather serious obstacles, these parts must ever remain as now, so impregnable that even the wild beasts are safe from molestation; while the rivers when navigable at all, are only so for some three months in the year, and there is no other reasonable means of entering the country.

Early in the month I climbed the Grizzly Bear Mountain in search of caribou; being fortunate enough to strike a fresh trail I eventually came on a band close to the snow line where the timber ceased, unfortunately the recognition was instantaneous on both sides, and ere I could put in even a snap shot the whole band stampeded in a straight line down the mountain side, as is their invariable custom in heavy snow; the conditions for running them seeming favourable, I instantly gave chase, finally arriving at the foot of the mountain, having undone a couple of hours' climb in about fifteen minutes, never accomplishing more than 100 yards on the same part of my body, down I went head first, feet first, on my face, back or sides, according to circumstances over which I had no control whatever, until on reaching level ground I found that the disastrous thaw of February when all the caribou took to the mountains, had rendered the crust sufficiently hard to sustain their weight without offering the slightest hinderance, therefore after cleaning

the snow out of my rifle, which in the descent had become full cocked and completely choked, I gave up the chase as useless. Two other mountains did I try the same week on the off chance of obtaining a shot by stalking, but the search proved fruitless, though the old trails were plentiful I was unable to locate the game. The weather showing signs of again breaking up, I determined to sacrifice our tents with every available piece of cotton material in a final effort to render the roof waterproof, for we had lately endured the utmost misery from the constant rains. I had tried the effect of covering the mud with newspapers, but the frost burst them up in humps. By cutting up and joining together the two tents with other things and rigging them up on frames at a considerable angle, I at length, to a great extent, overcame the difficulty though the heavy winds and snows now proved serious opponents to the weakened materials of the tents which had already seen considerable service.

Towards the middle of the month a piece of cruel bad luck lost us the chance of some meat, for during my absence, L., observing the jay looking out of the window somewhat more intently than usual went to see what was so interesting it, and there within seventy yards out on the river was a caribou puzzling his brains how to continue his journey down without crossing our trail, L. instantly sought the rifle which was always kept loaded, but which happened just then to be put on one side out of the rain, failing to see it she seized her own; but after slipping in the cartridges, owing to a striker having become rusted, the barrels would not close, and while thus struggling she had the mortification of watching the caribou, after finally having made up his mind to rush the obstructing trail, slowly retreating in the distance; after discovering the other rifle she set off in pursuit, but found a stern chase a proverbially long one, returning more dead than alive after a heavy tramp through the sodden snow.

Our late starvation diet, which in L.'s case was restricted to bread and butter, for owing to indigestion she was unable to eat rice, and disliked porridge, had a remarkable effect on Fred, who originally, in the days of plenty appeared to pride himself on being so delicately constituted as to be unable to eat fat bacon or pork; he now, however, looked upon bread and lard as a standing dish, his luxuries consisting of marten, which he declared beautiful, wolverine still better, and otter in every respect equal to beaver, we never grudged him these delicacies, much as we pined for meat ourselves, indeed, L. at one time had been unable to resist the temptation of a piece of otter's liver, though she failed to face the dish a second time, while the smell of a wolverine would be ample for most people. One day, having started out to set a fresh line of traps, I somehow missed the spot which I had previously noted as a likely looking place, and was therefore forced to return with the intention of hanging my load of traps in the nearest accessible position, there to await a second attempt some other time. Having reached an open space, and deposited them on an old tree, I stood still, and produced my frugal mid-day snack, for the weather was now mild enough to admit of my opening my mouth, during the mumbling of this, I saw something black moving among the willows, a bear, surely, thought I, but no, out walked a fine black wolf, 125 yards distant, just 25 yards beyond the Parodox's regulated limit, but such a rare opportunity was not to be lost for the want of a little elevation, the first shot though low, was lucky enough to break a foreleg, while the wolf instead of making good its escape, stood

and tore at the wounded limb with her teeth, another shot broke the other foreleg, rendering her an easy victim, and for the next three-quarters of an hour I was busily engaged skinning, and at the completion of the operation, having been tolerably wet before I commenced, for snow had fallen steadily all day, my feet felt half frozen, and my hands incapable of any longer controlling the knife, but I deemed myself well recompensed, by having secured a prize, which from its scarcity I had lately given up all hopes of obtaining, and I trudged home with a heart as light as my legs were weary. Two days later I returned to weigh and measure the carcase. I had heard that the wolves in these parts were reckoned as monsters in size, but this one, although a female, impressed me as being unusually fine, some idea of her size may be gained from the weight, when contrasted with a gaunt dog, if one can readily be found to scale 91 lbs., for that was her entire weight, though she appeared by no means wolfish in the usual acceptation of the term, resembling far more a handsome specimen of the canine race, in fact, of the two white, and one grey wolves which I had previously killed, the latter only conveyed the impression of sly sneaking gauntness, the ordinary characteristic of wolves, the white and black species being of very different build, with handsome broader heads. The universal opinion in British Columbia appeared to be that white, black, and grey wolves were simply a variety of the same species: that white, black, and grey are occasionally found in the same litter, I admit, but this is due to the promiscuous crossing which takes place among them, that the grey is a distinct species I have no doubt, and I think that the white and black are also distinct, though every possible shade and variety between the three is to be met with.

CHAPTER XXX.

THAT "it never rains but it pours" is an old adage which was most provokingly realised on this day, for on dissecting the wolf killed two days before, I felt somewhat interested to learn whether her fare of late could have been as meagre as ours, therefore, opening the stomach, I displayed her late heavy meal of caribou. The appearance of the large junks of meat suggested that no ravenous gnawing of bones had taken place, and that therefore there was, in all probability, a considerable supply remaining where that had come from. Vivid recollections of having tasted nothing of the sort, save a very few grouse, for over six weeks, quickly started me on the lady's back-trail, determined to make a raid on her no longer needed larder. I had gone but little over a mile when I came to a hole in the snow, surrounded by remnants of caribou skin. After considerable labour with my chopper I brought to light a hind leg at a depth of five feet. The animal had evidently been killed nearly four months before, in all probability by a lynx which I had caught close by in November. It had only been discovered by the wolf the day previous to her death, and the meat, except where tainted by the entrails, appeared perfectly sweet, though decidedly tender. Eagerly detaching the haunch I set off home with it, feeling on the best of terms with myself for effecting the discovery and anticipating L.'s joy at once more having something to eat. As may be imagined, my

disgust on reaching the shanty was considerable when I discovered that two Indians had arrived from Fort George with our mail and thirty pounds of bacon; nor was the surplus of luxuries to an end here, for Fred shortly returned with a three-legged beaver he had found wandering about in the snow, and had promptly knocked on the head with a stick, but not before it had caused him serious alarm by getting on his snow shoe, in which position he trembled for the safety of his legs. Either of these three long-sought edibles would have proved a perfect godsend before, but arriving as they did all together any two of them were superfluous.

The Indians, who ought to have been far away up the river a month ago, informed us that the delay had been occasioned through an outbreak of measles, which had so thinned their ranks that among the survivors there were but eight fit to hunt, and that as it was so late they did not propose to take their usual trip higher up. The lessening of their numbers gave me no concern, though the prospect of having them hanging around was a much more disturbing matter, for I particularly desired the place to myself when the bears should first appear, and I felt sure their presence would greatly mar my sport; besides which I had discovered several beaver dams, and was only awaiting the spring to annex the occupants which I foresaw would now become one of their primary objects. Anyway, there was no cause for immediate alarm for they were as yet camped at the cañon 25 miles below, where they were busily engaged hunting caribou. On one or two occasions after a thaw we noticed that a beaver had made its way up one of their numerous drains leading into the small lake and from thence through the

covering of snow into the open air, where it had eaten a hearty meal of willow bark, we immediately set a trap, though unsuccessfully, for it never reappeared except by a fresh hole, but at a house at the other extremity of the lake we were more fortunate having seen signs of what we supposed to have been a beaver, we set a trap under the water in the only place where it was unfrozen, the open water only covered a space of about 16 inches in diameter being no more than 6 inches deep, during the first night after setting the trap it was frozen over, and two days later on breaking the ice we found the trap thrown with a bunch of whiskers firmly gripped between the jaws, but they bore little resemblance to those of a beaver, evidently whatever it was had, while squeezing itself along under the ice, thrown the trap with its chin; a few days later the problem was solved by the capture of an otter in the same trap, minus its whiskers on one side, this otter had clearly inhabited the adjacent beaver house, and moreover it was perfectly certain that it had never left the lake throughout the winter or we should have seen its tracks, in this case its only food must have consisted of musk rats or minnows, for according to the Indians there were no fish there nor had I ever seen a sign of anything beyond an inch in length myself; until making this discovery I was under the impression that otters lived solely on fish, though I had known them attracted to a piece of meat either in order to smell it or out of curiosity.* Being struck by the immense bounds taken by otters, while travelling over soft snow, I one day measured the distance between the tracks, and found it frequently to exceed 10 feet on the flat, which is more than four times the length of the animal's body, this when considered in connection with its ridiculously short legs seems an enormous distance to cover, they always appeared to have enjoyed themselves immensely on these rambling excursions, rolling and slithering about in the snow on every opportunity, their favorite game being to slide down a steep cliff, where they made a regular tobogganing track, ascending by one path in order to slide down the other, where from constant use the snow was worn into a smooth icy groove, down this they slid into the water.

During this month I managed to secure a specimen of a bird which, supposing such a thing to be possible, appeared to be a cross between a hawk and an owl, to decide which of the two it more closely resembled would be difficult, though perhaps I should incline to the side of the owl; therefore, for lack of its true name we will designate it an owl-hawk. I had seen one once before chasing an owl of twice its own size, though I succeeded in shooting it, it was lost through falling out of sight in the snow, but this one was perched on a dead tree, to which my eyes were directed by hearing what I mistook for the cry of a hawk. It was a small bird, scarcely so large as the English long-eared owl, and beyond its colouring of brown plentifully spotted and mottled with white, and having a tail much longer than ordinary owls, I cannot more graphically describe it than as half way between a hawk and an owl.

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* I believe that both otters and beavers, like the musk rat, are capable of existing under ice for any length of time, and travelling long distances, by means of renewing their breath by the process of expelling it in one large bubble and inhaling it again when it has regained the exhausted gas from the surrounding water. Under certain conditions of clear ice musk rats are easily killed by striking the ice sharply over them as soon as they have expelled their breath, thus driving them away from the spot when they quickly drown, and a hole is chopped in order to fish them out.

Amongst the numerous owls of these parts is the snowy owl, and a delightful little species which must have originated in Fairy Land and hawked butterflies, for it is little, if any, larger than a hawfinch. Also in the spring one's attention was constantly attracted by the shrill whistle of a corresponding diminutive animal—a tiny hare no more than five inches long. Another bird of which I saw the dried skin, though probably only a stray visitor is worthy of notice, for I do not think vultures rightly belong to these regions. It was a small species of vulture about half the size of a turkey buzzard.

March showed little indication of retiring in the lamb-like fashion one usually anticipates, though certain indications of the advent of spring were not wanting in the appearance of innumerable creeping and crawling creatures, which constantly dropped from the bark-covered trees composing our roof. These were only thoroughly appreciated by the jays, though the presence of a sturdy woodpecker was really necessary to keep down the ever increasing population, especially numerous in the dead logs. The willows, too, had thrown out a procession of silky knobs, which, in spite of clambering up their stems, seemed never destined to reach the top, and I found a black, woolly caterpiller coolly strolling over the snow, apparently impervious to cold; but the most unwelcome warning that summer was at hand appeared in the fur of the last lynx caught, which came out freely, though I tried to think it an exception, especially as the pelt was in prime condition; but experience had taught me contrary to the opinion adhered to by fur-traders, that the condition of the pelt is a true and unfailing indication as to the primeness of the fur; a prime pelt is by no means an infallible accompaniment to prime fur, and more especially *vice versâ*, for of the martens I caught in and after March the majority had hard, dark, ill-conditioned-looking pelts, while in every case the fur was very far superior to those trapped in December, with prime pelts—less under-fur and shorter hair. In the case of every animal I found their condition in March better than December.

I was frequently astonished at the agility displayed by Martens, particularly in pine trees where they were occasionally to be seen capering about almost as actively as squirrels, in fact in America I believe they actually capture the large grey squirrel, which is a clumsy animal, but the little red ones out here were too quick for them, unless taken unawares on the ground. When perched on a tree a marten looks remarkably pretty, nor is it amiss in any other position, we found them excessively greedy, never failing to make for the bait, usually a portion of one of their own species; in their anxiety to obtain the coveted morsel, they appeared quite regardless whether the trap in front of it was exposed or otherwise, and if a marten was anywhere in the locality it was long odds on its being caught.

Much has been said and written in favour of the importance of guarding against animals when trapped, escaping by gnawing off their feet or legs. I believe such a thing to be of extremely rare occurrence, and even in the event of its having taken place, I should be inclined to think that if the leg was not twisted off the amputation had been effected by accident while gnawing at the trap, this is liable to happen in frosty weather, when the foot below where the trap grips it, becomes frozen hard, in which state, the captive naturally fails to distinguish between it and the trap, it was on such an occasion, that the only animal we lost (a marten) effected its escape although we never took the slightest precautions to guard against self amputation. I think, therefore, that the fact of only one animal

out of 177 thus escaping, suggests that the habit is so exceptional as to be a matter of insignificance. With rodents such as squirrels and rats I am more doubtful and think they do frequently gnaw off their legs, though not with the deliberate intention of thereby effecting their escape. But beavers by their excessive weight unless promptly drowned are always liable to screw off a fore leg.

Considering how few animals existed in our locality, we had every reason to feel satisfied with the trapping proceeds of the month of March, which included eight different varieties of animals, the total amounting to twenty-two head, namely, nine marten, six ermine, one wolverine, one otter, two skunks, one wolf, one beaver, and one lynx, a second of the latter Fred lost, trap and all.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE termination of March left but one more month of trapping, ere the skins would become useless; therefore in April, I worked the traps with, if possible, more ardour than ever, but the cold weather marred the take during the early part of the month, while Fred's spring contribution amounted to next to nothing. One of the first captures was a skunk, most persons have heard of these animals, though few have the remotest idea of what they are like, while still fewer have suffered the misfortune of winding one. For the benefit of such I offer the results of a few timid experiments on about a dozen of these detestable animals, which are comely enough to look upon, while their glossy black coats striped with two bars of white, surmounted by a large cockade-like tail, carried erect, offer every inducement to add so handsome a skin to the trapper's collection; but how to skin them without becoming tainted with their odious perfume, I have never yet discovered; I should be more correct in saying, that how to kill them without provoking the offensive discharge was the insurmountable difficulty, for herein lies the trouble, the fur and skin being pure enough until the fatal moment arrives. The first time we ever smelt a skunk, L. and I felt considerably disappointed, and thought it a much over rated animal, but it is a scent which grows on one amazingly, and after a few hours spent with a freshly stripped skin hanging in the shanty, we began to loathe it; nor have constant applications overcome the dislike. I have winded a skunk three miles off, and drawn direct to the defunct animal. We were once forced to remove the carcase of one which some ravens had pulled to pieces on the opposite side of the river, this at a distance of 500 yards rendered the atmosphere in the shanty unendurable. At another time Fred and I were shooting ducks on the opposite sides of the lake, on hearing him fire, I was informed almost with the speed of electricity, that his mark had been a skunk; theirs is indeed a marvellously potent fluid, the tiniest speck on one's clothing, haunts the wearer for days. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the distance to which this fluid is ejected, has been considerably exaggerated; instead of 15 yards, to which range some naturalists have credited the animal with being capable of discharging, I have never been able to trace the fluid for a greater distance than 9 feet, nor have I ever known a skunk to retaliate with this formidable weapon of defence, until either closely missed by a descending stick or actually wounded; through on one occasion I spent some

twenty minutes playing with and teasing one I met in a wood, it showed no signs of fear neither did it attempt to hurry away. I never approached it nearer than three yards, on which occasions, when I hustled it, it invariably faced me, as I always found to be their custom when caught in a trap, making spiteful little pounces at me. I threw several sticks towards it, but not until one hit it did I notice the unmistakable odour, when being weary of the game, which no longer interested me, I left the little beast to go its way in peace. I once put my head to the mouth of a large hole inhabited by them; there must have been some domestic misunderstanding within, for their home smelt anything but nice. Many persons consider them excellent eating, though I should be extremely sorry to be compelled to try one. The smell of a skunk, I consider one of the few things in the description of which exaggeration is impossible, though I believe their powerful weapon of defence is rarely, if ever, resorted to, except as a last resource. Like most other animals, they readily devour their nearest relation's corpse, and lynxes I found very partial to them.

On the 5th, the Indians put in an unwelcome appearance, camping on the opposite side of the river, a nearer position being, fortunately, barred by our having burned all the dead timber. I quickly learned that they proposed making an immediate raid on my two recently discovered beaver dams, but luckily there was too great a depth of snow upon the ice of the nearest, for them to successfully work their nets, therefore, this was left me undisturbed, though neither by offer of bribery or presents could I induce them to leave me the second dam, close to which they took up their quarters after remaining with us one day, they had caught 20 beavers below, and though their principle of netting was arduous and required intimate knowledge of the beavers playholes round the dams, it undoubtedly proved most effective. I had previously been disappointed at my want of luck with the solitary net in my possession, but I now learned that as many as five were used at once, and never less than two. We did a pretty bit of brisk trading for many of their skins, getting rid of a considerable quantity of rubbish in the way of wearing apparel, an old red plush cloak of L.'s, which had been handsome enough in its day of many years ago and which we had sent for from Victoria especially with the idea of palming it off on a medicine man at the Forks, was in spite of its having been submerged in the Skeena, immediately snapped up when priced at four large beaver skins, their trade value at Fort George being 32 dollars, the equivalent to which was eagerly given by the Tyee to purchase this truly gorgeous attire for his squaw, a large fat woman, who wriggled herself into the garment prouder than any peacock, utterly regardless of the irremediable misfit, which was so excessive that through the great strain across, half the cloak lay in heavy folds at the back of her neck. The others, being assured that we possessed no duplicate of this article, were forced to content themselves with less attractive adornments, one giving a $3 skin for part of a silk striped handkerchief 2 ft. by 5 ins., while for the tobacco which I smoked myself, being done up in lead foil—although little, if any, superior to that which is supplied them at $1½ per lb.—they willingly gave at the rate of $8 per lb. It would thus appear that for once I was getting the best of the wily red men, but on more carefully examining the skins after their departure, I found several considerably damaged by holes, which in the dimness of the light shed by our solitary lamp, had been successfully hidden from me while trading was in progress.

While skinning some caribou I discovered quantities of large maggots, crowded round and firmly attached to the cartilage of their noses, close to their throats. They retained a tight hold by their tails, and were from half to three-quarters of an inch in length, of a greenish colour. Many were deeply embedded in the fleshy part of the lips and under the skin of the necks and shoulders. Others in a chrysails stage were secreted under the skin about the withers. On inquiry of the Indians as to their origin, they informed me that they were the larvæ of the horse fly, and that all the caribou were similarly afflicted at this season. I could had I chosen have killed plenty of caribou at this period, but all the old bulls having shed their antlers in the fall, the meagre appendages of the cows and calves did not offer me sufficient inducement to climb the mountain in search of them except for food.

In a marten caught on the 8th I found three young ones, but the fur was still prime. Whereas that of an ermine taken on the day following was loose and brown beneath. On the 10th I put up three Canadian geese and a few days later a couple of ducks. These early arrivals must have found any description of food exceedingly scarce, for as yet the only open water was that at the entrances of a few creeks. Arctic hares appeared to be about once more, although we were never favoured with more than a sight of their tracks in the snow, while oddly enough although flying squirrels must have existed in considerable numbers, none of us ever saw one alive, we caught twenty-six in the traps, but their flesh was so appreciated by other squirrels and mice that in no single instance did we secure a perfect specimen, seldom being left more than a leg or a tail. The common red squirrel, except that it provided bait, proved an intolerable nuisance; we caught over three hundred of them, and if we ever observed either squirrel, jay, or whiskey jack, looking on at us while setting a trap, we gave up all idea of finding it tenanted on our next visit otherwise than by one of the three. I asked the Indians how it was we found no porcupines. They said two years ago there were plenty, but that periodically they disappeared and that very likely next year there would be lots again, want of food could have had nothing to do with their absence, for they lived during the winter on the bark of trees which is ever present, therefore the cause of migration among porcupines is another enigma to be solved by some energetic naturalist of the future. By the 15th many small migratory birds had arrived, conspicuous among them being golden crested wrens, a few ducks also sought the open creeks, while geese were to be seen daily as, passing to and fro, they trumpeted forth their varied and rasping calls, on the 17th I heard the first grouse drum, immature eggs we had discovered in them some six days previously. At this period gulls might constantly be seen circling aloft evidently in search of open water. Towards the end of the month I shot a handsome fawn coloured crane with a ruby head, a common enough bird no doubt but of sufficient novelty to me to cause considerable anxiety and inconvenience in carrying it home to L. without ruffling a feather, for though she often lent a hand with the animals, and could skin and stretch a beaver as well as an Indian, the preserving of birds was her special avocation, and a pretty tough customer the crane proved, providing ample occupation for the best part of a day. In spite of this I received instructions to be sure and shoot the other which had escaped me on the same day that I secured this specimen. I flushed an occasional snipe on the swamps and margin of the beaver dams, and several other birds something of the sandpiper species which, oddly enough, perched continually on the tops of fir trees. A few

days later, on visiting an otter trap, I found a white headed eagle caught in it. This was the first I had seen in these parts, their scarcity on the Frazer being remarkable when compared with their abundance on some of its tributaries. On the last day of the month I lost a fine beaver which had left its fore leg in the trap. During the month the total catch amounted to three marten, nine ermine, five skunks, one mink, one musk rat, one wolverine, and one lynx.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOR two or three days the ice on the river had been on the move, sometimes a piece about three-quarters of a mile long would come floating down and then jam at the next bend, it was still strong enough to walk on, being a foot or more in thickness, though it contained many holes and soft places which required care, but on the 2nd of May it suddenly broke up. Within five minutes of a death-like stillness, all was noise, bustle and confusion, great overhanging trees were snapped off or torn from the banks, sending sharp echoes vibrating through the hills. Huge blocks of ice towered up, and toppling over came crashing down on the ice below, others became wedged up in masses some seventeen feet high in the centre of the river, and throughout the day for the first time in my life I saw the tables turned in such a fashion as to behold my old trail of the past winter, up which I had been in the habit of plodding, calmly sliding by me, every stick and indentation on the ice I knew by heart, and what used to take me hours of toil to reach now came to meet me, crashing, jamming and sliding away, it passed on towards the sea. But on the following day, save for a mighty mass piled high along the banks, all was broken up and soon disappeared altogether. We easily guessed what had happened, it had blocked somewhere higher up and the water quickly fell several feet, but as I was particularly anxious to visit and remove some traps where the trail was becoming daily worse and worse, being covered with about two feet of water, I determined to take Fred in the canoe and cross the river. This we accomplished and returned with the traps, but found the river again choked with masses of descending ice. Having no blanket I did not much relish the idea of spending the night on the wrong side of the river within sight of my comfortable home, and therefore decided to attempt a crossing; there was occasionally ample room to paddle between the blocks, but it was impossible to tell from one moment to another, how soon they would jam together and smash up the canoe like half a nut shell, however, we seized a favourable opportunity and shoved off. After a few minutes of intense excitement we reached the opposite side some distance from the shanty, and set to work to haul up the canoe free of danger. This took us about twenty minutes, for the bank was steep, and on returning home I found poor L. all of a heap in the depths of misery. She had noticed us on the opposite side and had then gone to look at something she was cooking, returning too late to see us cross, and the canoe being hauled completely out of sight, she supposed it to have been stove in and sunk. Hastening along the bank to an impassable creek she could still see nothing and, returned to the shanty never doubting but that she was a solitary widow in a very lone land. However, she soon got over her scare and quickly fetched the dinner, which she

had imagined would never more be needed. During this month, when all other fur had become valueless, I devoted my time exclusively to catching beaver, and freezingly cold work it was too. The nearest dam with any occupants left in it was four or five miles distant, surrounded by densely entwined willows for a mile or more. It was impossible to reach this otherwise than on snow shoes, and it took an entire day to get there and back, for it had been no easy matter to penetrate these willows even on firm snow, but now there was simply a thick layer of it over from one to four feet of water. Through this the snow shoes were everlastingly cutting, plunging one up to the waist in icy water. Three weeks I spent soaked from the thighs downwards, yet a cold in the head was quite unknown. The beavers at this period were most difficult to secure, for they only emerged from the water through small holes in the ice where it was impossible to drown them, hence, when caught by the fore leg the foot was nearly always twisted off, and a big beaver was certain to escape. After carefully cutting a hole in the ice, should not a suitable one exist, and scraping away a scoop in the bank similar to the work of a beaver, then setting the trap under the water, and sprinkling a little castorum or "beaver medicine" about, I would be rewarded on the following day by finding a cursed musk rat in the trap, and every indication of a beaver's having landed at the spot after its capture. I one day found each trap tenanted by a rat except one, and that had a duck in it. As may be imagined I felt no love for musk rats, though I have known their fur sold as sable The next dam was so far off that when I set traps there I had to sleep close by. This was a great place for cranes, ducks and geese. The latter are fond of selecting beaver houses as convenient sites for their nests, especially those houses built on islands, where their eggs are safer.

The water soon increased so much that it became impossible to select a regularly used spot whereon to set a trap, and the beavers also left the lakes for their summer rambles along the river banks. A great quantity of worthless beaver fur is taken by the Indians towards the end of May and later, at which period, before the animals are skinned the fur comes out freely, but after the pelt is dried it becomes fast again, and is bought by the Hudson Bay Company as prime ; but on being dressed I have small doubt that it once more becomes loose. Few animals have more points of interest than the beaver, which, by the judicious damming up of small streams, converts miles of country into lakes of considerable depth. Many are the erroneous accounts of the marvellous intelligence displayed by them in their method of effectually damming a stream, but I never observed any greater dexterity exhibited than the accumulation of a mass of sticks and branches entwined and wedged together, across a stream, and filled in with mud, banking up the water sometimes as high as six feet, nor have I ever seen a dam curved against the stream. They were all either straight across or bulging downwards. I one day measured a cotton tree on the bank of the Fraser, which had been cut down by a beaver, its circumference above where it had been severed was nine feet two inches, apparently the opperator had in its mind some ambitious scheme for damming up the river. Frequently when cutting down small trees, one sliding down perpendicularly off the stump, comes with its sharply gnawed edge on to the beaver's tail, hence the slits often observed in them, which I used to mistake for the result of fighting between themselves. I have never been able to arrive at the object of the double nail on the second toes of the hind feet, which seemed to me very remarkable. They breed at three years old, at which time they are little more than half-grown.

On the 8th of May, I found three young ones in a beaver far advanced. If shot when their fur is good a beaver floats, but in summer when the under fur is gone it sinks immediately. About two days journey from our winter quarters was a large lake, which the Indians assured us was never frozen, and where lots of swans and wild fowl spent the winter, not knowing how to reach this lake I was much disappointed at being unable to visit it, nor do I know why the water does not freeze. Though there appeared something peculiar about the water in several small creeks flowing from the mountains, which although with less current than the river were only covered with ice after unusually hard frosts.

Our sojourn was rapidly drawing to a close. Daily we expected the Indians from Fort George to fetch us. Those who had been hunting above had made their canoes, and already returned to their village, and the river was rising rapidly. The country was one great swamp, and much too wet for the bears I had expected to find, which had evidently gone elsewhere to seek their spring diet of skunk, cabbages and grass, not a blade of the latter was to be seen in our locality, nor a leaf or even an opening bud was visible up to the time we left, save in our bedroom, where quite a respectable fernery had sprung up at the foot of the bed, composed of fully-grown plants a foot and a half high; but outside, except along a narrow strip of bank where the sun had full power, it was still impossible to get about without snow shoes.

The mosquitoes had been gradually increasing, and were once more becoming a nuisance.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FOR the benefit of any person desiring to purchase a good bearskin, I offer this piece of advice: Do not buy one that has been killed in the interior, it is the only fur, so far as I am aware, which deteriorates inland, all other animals improve to a wonderful extent, but I have never seen a really good bearskin from the interior: those obtained on the North Pacific Coast are magnificent, and cannot, I believe, be equalled elsewhere. It is, I understand, a disputed point whether bears derive sustenance from sucking their paws, I am under the impression that they do by this means extract something which apparently affords them considerable enjoyment, causing them to purr the while like a huge cat. Their mode of operation is to nibble and suck the upper surface of the fore feet, especially in the region of the toes, which become covered with a white lather, the soles are never treated in this manner. On leaving their *caches* their feet are soft and tender, causing them such pain in walking that they seldom go more than a few hundred yards until the soles gradually harden, and what was once impenetrable skin falls off in patches which look like coarse grey plush with pile about an eighth of an inch deep. I killed one bear in this condition close to his *cache* about 6 feet up in a hollow pine tree. I do not intend to insinuate that this tenderness is caused from sucking the feet, as it naturally arises from lying inactive for some six months. Little cubs spend hours sucking one another's ears, and humming like a thrashing machine in the distance, but their motive, I fancy, is much the same as that which induces a baby to suck its thumb. By the 13th of May we had everything packed in readiness for our immediate

start, for we could see by the state of the river that there was no time to lose if the canoes were to be got through the cañon in safety. On the 14th, our Indians arrived, they had seen two bears about seven miles below, I suggested camping near the spot on our way down, but they said no, we must not waste a single hour, I therefore took two Indians, and started out to fetch in the remainder of my beaver traps. We found nothing in them but muskrats, and with this day terminated our two winters' trapping, the first miserably, for I afterwards learned that what few skins I had secured had been either lost or stolen in transit to Victoria; and the last, well, it had not been very productive partly through an error on my part and greatly owing to Fred's incapability, for during the early autumn, when I ought to have devoted all my time to my traps, I had been hunting big game instead, often not having time even to bait them. I supposed that having the whole winter before me, there would be plenty of opportunity for trapping later on, but, as the reader is aware, as the snow accumulated so the animals disappeared, and in the spring Fred caught next to nothing, while out of the six wolverine and lynxes, which during the winter had been rash enough to place their feet in his carelessly-set traps, three decamped taking the traps with them; but for these shortcomings the proceeds would have been considerably increased, though at the best all game was scarce. Our total bag of fur from the previous August, including 12 beaver caught in May, amounted to 179 head —54 marten, 52 ermine, 19 beaver, 18 muskrats, 9 skunks, 8 mink, 7 lynxes, 5 wolverine, 3 bears, 1 wolf, 1 fisher, 1 coyote, 1 otter.

On the 15th, all being in readiness, and the three canoes loaded, L., with two Indians and myself, proceeded in our small one, giving instructions to the others to keep far in the rear, but no amount of precaution will prevail against bad luck. We found a beaver close to the bank, and failed to get a shot. The next crew killed it, and soon after saw a bear swim across the river. This they chased for some distance on land and lost; but we saw nothing more than a few tracks in the mud, and finally reached the cañon, where the river was rising rapidly, and already none too low for running it with safety. It was too late to get the canoes through that night, therefore as much baggage as possible was packed over, and everything set in order for a start at daybreak. Next morning the cat was missing and could be found nowhere. A full hour was wasted hunting for her, until the Indians declared that the rising water was rendering the cañon so dangerous that in a short time it would become impassable. Feeling like murderers at leaving a comrade in the lurch, we were forced to abandon the poor cat, for there was more bad water below the cañon, and we dared remain no longer. We therefore started along the trail to the further end of the cañon, while the Indians lowered the canoes with long ropes past the most dangerous points, finally emerging in safety. Here we had proof that even the Fort George Indians were none too reliable, for though it had been clearly explained to them at Fort George, before they agreed to come for us, that one canoe and two Indians would be required to remain behind to hunt with us, yet each refused to stay unless paid extra. Two pleaded illness, which was true enough, for they were suffering from a mysterious kind of fever, the only native sickness unconnected with civilisation that I have ever come across in North America, the symptoms of which were a splitting headache with a swollen and sore throat, apparently accompanied by great prostration. Those suffering from it, with true Indian fortitude, simply curled themselves up to die, and very frequently they did die too.

1887—1888.

ON FRAZER RIVER.—Lat. 54° 15′. Lon. 122° 10′.

Date.	November.		December.		January.		February.		March.		April.	May.
	Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.		Fahrenheit.	
	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Zero.	Frost.	Frost.
1	—		17			8	—		20		20	4
2	—		21		26		8		28		24	6
3	—			9	23		11		26		4	4
4	3		30			26	10			9	10	—
5	4			9		30	12			10	24	—
6	3		30			34	10			4	18	4
7	3		30			22	5		20		1	—
8	—		27			23	—			2	—	—
9	—			16		10	3			11	5	—
10	6		30			14	—			4	10	3
11	5			1	20		7		27		13	—
12	—		5			24	13		22		1	2
13	—		12			27		2	9		—	4
14	5		—			30		2	3		4	1
15	5		1			25	26		10		5	7
16	6		4			15	—		—		13	
17	6		—			3	—		—		17	
18	3		8			18	—		—		13	
19	—		26			39	9		15		2	
20	1		21			41	4		8		2	
21	12		20			21	4		11		—	
22	23		8			10	—		7		—	
23	13		11			23	4		—		—	
24	26		10			10	5		4		—	
25		2		1		9	5		24		—	
26		4	24		21		—		5		2	
27	28		30		—		—		6		4	
28	19		30		—		15		2		7	
29	12			7	8				—		3	
30	12			7	—				24		4	
31				20	—				27			

However, after decidedly refusing them any extra pay I was only able to induce one called Johnnie, about the best of the race we ever came across, to accompany us, he was little more than a boy, but rather than give up the bears I determined to work with him, and hard work I found it, for our canoe required three hands to work it properly, however, we successfully navigated the remainder of the bad water with the help of an Indian from one of the other canoes, and at dusk bid adieu to the remainder of the party, who were to travel all night with Fred, who had orders to make the best of his way to Victoria, along the same route as that by which we had come out, for having left word with all the Indians we passed to secure any young animals they could lay their hands on, I intended Fred to purchase and bring them on to Victoria. Next morning, at day-break, Johnnie and I set out for a lake where we thought we might find a bear, but our passage up the creek was so blocked by driftwood we were forced to return to camp. The weather had changed and become bitterly cold again, and after turning L. out of bed, where she had supposed herself safe for some hours longer, we struck camp, and set off down stream for Great Salmon River which we soon reached. A short time after entering the river, five Serf Scoters came floating down the stream, fast asleep, bumping and cannoning against each other as the swift current hurried them along, when within shot L. browned them, securing three, but they proved anything but delicacies when cooked. Johnnie said he knew of a lake close here, so I started off with him to see what was about, we found one bear's track, some geese and ducks, and five or six beaver houses, but nothing else sufficiently encouraging to warrant our remaining in the locality. Therefore returning to the canoe we pushed on up the river, seeking towards dusk for a good camping place, but the ground was still deep in snow, and it took us a considerable time to find even a moderately comfortable spot. Soon after daybreak next morning two Indians appeared, having come to trap beaver, of which there were a considerable number, they proposed going on up the river to set their traps, and returning that night, I arranged, therefore, to go with them in order to see what chance we should have of finding bears, but throughout the day we never saw a track, the snow was so thick everywhere that no grass was yet visible. On our return, the Indian in the bows, without saying a word of what he saw, craftily caught up his rifle, and let fly at a beaver, but the animal dived, and next time we all saw it together, and fired simultaneously, the beaver disappeared again, and the other Indian cried out, "I kill im, my beaver," presently I caught sight of it in the middle of the river, and in perfect health, quickly making for the opposite bank, attracting as little attention as possible, I fired, and was lucky enough to kill it dead, had one of the others fired too, I could never have persuaded him that I was the rightful owner, but as it turned out, there was no room for dispute.

Next day, thinking it no good to remain, we hunted steadily down Salmon river and into the Fraser, resting in the middle of the day and resuming our journey in the afternoon, but though we spent two or three days in this fashion we saw nothing but a beaver in one of the many intersecting slews, I fired two shots and missed, the second bullet passing under the beaver so alarmed it that it hurried out of the water and up the bank; at the same moment L. picked up the Paradox and shot it dead, regardless of my feelings in the presence of an Indian. I was immediately struck by the diminutive size of this beaver, and by the stunted shape of its tail.

I said to Johnnie "That's an old beaver?" He replied, "Yes." I then asked why it was so small, he answered, "Dunno, beaver all the same like that up slews, guess no get 'im much muck-a-muck" (food). This beaver might almost have been mistaken for a different species, and instead of weighing something like 70 lbs. it was no more than 25 lbs. Nothing more did we see before reaching Fort George, where we found Fred evidently little anticipating our early return, for instead of hastening on his journey he was thoroughly enjoying himself in comfortable quarters. When finally he reached our old habitation on the Skeena without having obtained a single young animal on the road, it was only to find the Indians in revolt, with a detachment of troops on their way from Victoria to quell the rising. Here he was detained about two months, consequently instead of meeting us in Victoria I had to leave full instructions to enable him to reach England. At Fort George we were delayed about eight days, here we heard that the Indian who had been sent to Quesnelle for our mail in the winter had returned to Fort George with the measles, distributing his acquisition so freely among his friends, that about an eighth of the population died and many more were reduced to a miserable condition.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHILE at Fort George, Johnnie having probably recited the story of L.'s wiping my eye over the beaver, several Indians called to challenge me to shoot their best man for a beaver skin. I asked at what distance. They said anywhere; 500 yards if I liked. To this I replied all right, I would shoot him the best out of three shots at 300 yards. "Good," they said, "to-morrow you see." Now I had no confidence in myself whatever when shooting at a mark with a rifle, for I don't think I ever fired twenty shots at such an object in my life; but I felt tolerably sure the distance would upset them, for though they often spoke of killing deer a mile off as though it were an every-day occurrence, I knew they had no accurate idea of measurement.

I painted a 4-inch bullseye on a box, and when the time arrived we set off to measure the 300 yards. The distance having been paced, and the box set in position, my opponent cried out "Too far," and after a great deal of haggling I reduced it to 200. I had taken the precaution to bring my skin with me, and requested them to deposit theirs, but they said they had not got it with them, and promised to pay afterwards if they lost. This did not suit me at all, so I declined to shoot until their stake was down, and they reluctantly sent off for the skin. When it arrived it was such a wretchedly bad one, that I refused to stake mine against it, and they produced a second, which had been kept in reserve in case I should not be satisfied with the shattered remnant they hoped to palm off on me. They wished me to shoot my three shots first, probably anticipating the prolonged delights of a walk over afterwards. My first shot struck the corner of the box, the second exactly two inches over the bullseye, and the third missed everything. That second shot was a piece of luck, and I had no further doubt of the issue. Even the first would have been good enough, for my opponent never once went within a yard of the box. I then

prepared to shoot the next two who had previously announced their intention of each shooting me for a beaver skin; but no, they had had enough, and I have seldom seen Indians look so sick. "Too far," they said, "we shoot you from there," indicating a spot about eighty yards from the mark. "Will you shoot for a beaver skin?" I asked. "No," they replied, "only for fun." So we shot for fun with $1\frac{1}{2}$ added, and they beat me, as I felt they would if we came to close quarters, for their little repeaters were excellent toy rifles. But I never felt more gratified at winning a prize than when I secured that skin from their head marksman, for had I failed every white man for hundreds of miles round would have been taunted for generations to come, by hearing of the Indian who had beaten his countryman in a match for a bale of beaver skins.

I offered that L. should shoot any woman in the tribe for another skin, but her fame had gone abroad, and they had lost enough. I don't think that that tribe will ever again select a white man as an opponent to shoot against. After settling our account with the Hudson Bay Company we set out on our last trip down the Fraser, which was by this time almost in full flood, and so swift, that although a canoe could get down, it would not be possible for it to return again for six weeks or more.

We had engaged two Indians, one of them being Johnnie who spoke English well, did not own a rifle, and was in other respects reliable, but the canoe was too large for two men to handle with safety in the present state of the river, and was, moreover, too deep in the water being overloaded with baggage. We reached Fort George Cañon the first day, and after packing all the heavy articles, the Indians took a few light things in the canoe, and proceeded to run the cañon; the water was a bit worse than they had supposed, and they were all but capsized. Several things were thrown out, including, of course, that which could never be replaced, namely, all the notes we had taken during our trip, together with L.'s diary; by great good luck, however, the box floated, and was rescued, while the contents were quickly laid out in the sun to dry. That evening we slowly drifted along hunting for bears until dark. Next morning we started about five o'clock, the river had risen considerably in the night; and about midday we came in sight of a particularly bad-looking piece of water where the waves were rolling and dashing up stream to an alarming height. "How shall you pass that?" I said to Johnnie. "All right this side, good water here," he replied; but when he came within sight of what he had relied on as good water, he cried out, "no good;" and then calling out in an excited tone to the other Indian, the canoe was turned towards the opposite shore, and the two struggled with all their might. I needed not to glance at the faces of the panic-stricken Indians, pale with fear, and painfully distorted in their frantic efforts to propel the heavily loaded canoe free of danger. The magnitude of the peril was too apparent to require such demonstration; and at that moment while we were rapidly drifting into the very centre of the boiling mass, across which the canoe scarcely seemed to gain an inch, I would have laid fifty to one against the chances of any one of us; as for poor L. there was often a stage at which she became speechless, for those few minutes no power on earth could have loosened her tongue. Had I been able to reach the spare paddle the odds against us would have been greatly reduced, but in such water I dared not move to secure it, for the waves were already topping the gunwale, and it seemed impossible that we could escape. Like lightning we were swept along the

margin of the boil, and down lay the Indians in the bottom of the canoe, lest the heavy roll should capsize her. We had escaped, but it was a narrow shave, and the greedy Fraser rarely gives up its victims even when their destruction is complete. Too trying would it have been to be snuffed out at this last moment almost within the precincts of civilisation; but here we were well and hearty, though saved by no more than a single paddle stroke. The two Indians soon poked up their ugly faces with a sort of sickly grin on them, and emitted that ghastly chuckle which with them intimates a successfully passed danger, but would in a white man be regarded as the laugh of a maniac. After suggesting to Johnnie that I thought it would be as well on the next occasion of encountering bad water to beach the canoe, and go and see if there was a free passage, we continued our downward course, and passed the remainder of the day without seeing a living creature. The usual forest fires had commenced, and miles of timber was flaring and crackling in several directions close to the river's bank. Somewhere about here a moose had been killed a week previously, which is worthy of note, moose being rarely seen so far down the river. Next day we did not strike camp till two o'clock, as the locality looked a likely one for bears. Towards evening we reached the Cottonwood Cañon which the Indians declared to be impassible. Here we watched huge pine trees floating down in hundreds, hurled and swirled around and about, at one moment shooting sixty feet out of the water, the next taking a sudden header to reappear no more. The weather had become exceedingly warm, and the mosquitoes bad. All the things had been removed from the canoe and taken over the cañon to the landing at the opposite end, and next morning came the question of how to get the canoe up the precipitous rocks, which in one spot were almost perpendicular for about seventy feet. Johnnie said there were Chinamen mining close by who would help us; but on consulting them they refused to lend a hand under $15, this I declined to pay them, telling Johnnie we would do it ourselves; but after an hour's struggle we had only accomplished about eighty yards of the easiest part, and clearly saw that the remainder was an impossibility. I therefore sent to the Chinamen, offering $10, which they accepted, and in about an hour and a half more, we got the canoe over and down the other side of the cañon, we camped about a couple of hours further down the river in a favourite spot for mule deer, but not even a track was visible, and the mosquitoes there were frightful, completely covering one. This was my last attempted hunt, and even had there been game we could not have endured the flies. Here nailed to a large cotton tree I left my P. P. C. in the form of an old hat and all that was left of my breeches, probably as they are not calculated to excite the envy of an Indian they will remain where I placed them for years to come.

About here was noted for what are termed slides, or what we should call landslips, like everything else in these parts they were on a gigantic scale, some could be traced back for half a mile into the high cliffs, occasionally they even dam up the whole river; and though we saw no large ones yet there was in places a continual roar as hundreds of tons of cliff gave way and fell crashing into the water below, sometimes bringing with it clusters of great fir trees. We never dared approach these crumbling cliffs, giving them as wide a berth as possible. Owing to these annual displacements the bed of the river is constantly changing, its original course being marked by evenly cut plateaus. A spade full of earth from any of these

contains a considerable amount of gold, though only in sufficient quantities to repay a Chinaman for the labour of securing it, hence this portion of the Fraser swarms with these energetic little money grubbers, who seem to live on rice and vegetables, thereby spending next to nothing and saving a good deal, the whole banks for miles were dotted with the wretched little pigsties wherein they dwelt.

CHAPTER XXXV.

NEXT day, the 30th of May, we reached Quesnelle, where we enjoyed one of the greatest luxuries of civilisation, unknown to us for the last two years, namely, a bed with sheets, only one other thing was needed to complete the charm, and that was a glass of beer, but they had none; though several new acquaintances plied me with cocktails; perhaps it was from being unused to such drinks, but they very nearly blew the top of my head off, and scorched my throat as though a red hot rasp had been forced down it. I never knew before why they drank a glass of water after swallowing one of these things; I therefore declined at first, fearful of spoiling the flavour, but after my second cocktail, I dashed at the water, throwing it eagerly down my throat, to quench the flame, and deaden my sufferings; without doubt, those Quesnelle cocktails were scorchers. The stage for Ashcroft, which was the nearest point at which to strike the Canadian Pacific Railway, did not start for several days, nor did Quesnelle offer many attractions. I heard of a spot on the river's bank, where occasional bones of an extinct Indian tribe, called Chin-tsu-tah-lah-ho-ten were washed out into the river; here then, was an opportunity not to be missed; borrowing a spade, away I started skull hunting; after an hour's digging, during which time I only came across cremated Indians, carefully packed in birch bark cases, folded together and sewn round the edges; but finally I unearthed a perfect skeleton, with a beautiful head, from which, not a tooth was missing; with this and one cremated Indian, I returned to the village well satisfied. My proceedings had caused considerable interest among the Chinese, who, as is well known, are very careful to polish up their own bones, and send them back to their country. Six or seven called at different times, asking to see what I had dug up; I doubt if a nugget of gold would have excited them more.

While at Fort George, we had sent an Indian a couple of days journey to buy two little silver foxes, we had heard of, these not turning up before we left, Mr. Ogden had promised to send them in a canoe, which was to start at the end of the week, and would reach Quesnelle the day after we did; but at about the time we expected this canoe to arrive, one appeared floating down the river, wrong side up, it was quickly secured, and brought to land; there were no seats, and it was split up the whole length; no one could arrive at any definite conclusion as to whether this was the canoe expected or not, and it was not until after we reached Victoria, that we heard that the canoe containing our foxes, had been wrecked; one Indian was drowned, and the other with the foxes was saved, but we had now no means of obtaining them. The Indian drowned, was one of the crew who came to fetch us from our winter quarters.

On June the 2nd, we left Quesnelle on the stage bound for Ashcroft, a distance close on 300 miles. Very different we found this vehicle to those we had been accustomed to in America; we suffered no more inconvenience during this long drive than we should have done on an English coach. The roads were heavy with recent rain, but the pace was good, notwithstanding, and at mid-day on the 5th we pulled up at Ashcroft. No one who knew the Fraser higher up, where in some places it was fully two miles broad, would again recognise it at this end, where, after swallowing up another river of it own dimensions, it rushes through a narrow channel less than twenty yards in width. The whole

Mule Deer killed near Quesnelle.

country from Quesnelle appeared well stocked with mule deer, their fresh tracks being frequent along the road, and I could plan out a charming little trip by this route for anyone who cared sufficiently for wild fowl shooting to undertake it. I should suggest that on leaving the train at Ashcroft, a party of two, three, or more, should hire a waggon, and before commencing to shoot, should proceed about 100 miles along the road to Quesnelle in the fall of year, when the wild fowl frequent every little lake on their way south; I should advise two small air-boats being brought from England, and such guns as would be useful for swans, geese, and ducks. Each night could be spent in comfort at some farm-house on the way, and the party could, followed by the waggon, hunt all the lakes along the road back, where they would find as fine sport as could be desired, both fishing and shooting. The great charm to my mind in this trip, would be, that every head of game killed could be conveyed in the waggon, and on reaching Ashcroft, might be sent to Victoria or elsewhere, to be

sold, or disposed of as seemed fit; to me, the fact of throwing away a bird or animal when killed does away with all enjoyment, for if I have no use for a thing I prefer not to shoot it. I know of no place to equal this, combining as it does facility of approach, abundance of wild fowl, and the ease with which they may be disposed of.

All about Yale, which is not far from here, is a great country for mule deer, caribou and mountain sheep, but those who would be successful there must not delay, for it is too accessible to last long, and though hunted for the first time in 1886, I very much doubt if in 1890 it will prove worthy of a visit. I know of a few places in America, and elsewhere, which have not yet been hunted, and where game is plentiful, and other localities from which they have not yet been exterminated, but when I recall to mind the disgraceful fact that three out of every five of the self-termed sportsmen who visit American hunting grounds are bent on slaughter, I refrain from making public these discoveries which have cost me so dear; rather than play into the hands of such men as these, who I place on a level footing with the Indians, I must risk keeping a few true sportsmen out of their rights, for I think when one man discovers a good country he should make it known to his comrades in sport, who, if they are worthy of the term, will do little injury by selecting only good heads. Such as these are welcome to share my gleanings, and may rely on a prompt reply should they seek one from me, though a personal interview is more satisfactory. Let those who brag of killing big game by the dozen hold aloof; I have seen enough of their cruel and selfish work. I remember one day striking the deserted camp of an American sportsman, who, marvellous to relate, had torn himself away from his dollar collecting occupation, to indulge apparently in an attempted extermination of Wapiti. Close to his camp lay eight cows and calves. But perhaps I do this sportsman an injustice; he may only have been getting his hand in preparatory to purchasing a deer forest in Scotland, where his bags could be reported to the world. Where are the vast herds of buffalo which existed but a short time ago, and what means my constantly having found their carcases with hides, heads, and flesh intact? Was it that buffalo, being so easily approached, were constantly shot down simply for the gratification of seeing them fall; or was it the result of wild and reckless shooting? Who were the wanton destroyers of these noble beasts? Not Indians I take it, or the extermination would have resulted long before. If influential sportsmen exist in America, why, even in their own interests, do they not pass laws to successfully prevent such wholesale destruction? Buffalo will never again be found in their old haunts, but, ere it is too late, cannot Americans take means to prevent the total destruction of the handsomest stag in existence? Wapiti retreat before civilisation quicker than most deer, and as this cannot be retarded, surely a close season might be enforced and the killing of cows and calves prohibited. I am aware that a law existed prohibiting the removal of hides or heads from Wyoming, but why was it not enforced? It was a step in the right direction, and was, I believe, originated by English ranche owners, but like many other American regulations, was easily overcome. Nor do I concur with such a form of protection whereby the true hunter would be deprived of his trophies, thus pointing to the probability of its compilers being little interested in actual sport or protection unless it were of their own stock. In British Columbia, along the Pacific Coast, the deer, though numerous, are protected by a close season, which around Victoria, is, I believe, rigidly enforced, though, as you wander from there it becomes gradually laxer, until finally you

discover the news of such a restriction has not reached so far; nor is there any immediate reason why it should. Doubtless, our Government being a very humane one in such matters, will, as civilisation spreads, equally increase the vigilance of those appointed to attend to the game laws.

Indians are wanton destoyers of game, fully under the impression that the supply is inexhaustible, ever gratifying the desire of the moment regardless of consequences. Bitterly have many tribes already suffered, hastening their own starvation by reckless slaughter, failing to recognize that what in former days proved abundance for them, could not also supply the gradually encroaching white man, with the result that they have to an alarming extent been the means of their own destruction. I never knew an Indian lose an opportunity of killing any animal or bird, young or old, in or out of season, except grizzly bears, of which they have a wholesome dread, seldom risking a shot except from a tree or some other safe place. Before closing these pages we should ill-requite the many kindnesses and valuable aid received at the hands of the Hudson Bay Company, were we not to offer them our most sincere thanks. As a company they are all powerful and ever ready to assist the traveller unless he be a free trader, in which case he will find them as serious foes as they can be the reverse. Without their assistance I doubt the possibility of a journey through the wilds of British Columbia. Individually we found the officers at the different posts whom I have already mentioned by name kind friends, pleasant companions, and generous to a degree. And we again take this opportunity of reminding them that should they find themselves once more in the Old Country their hospitality shall be returned with interest if possible.

END.

APPENDIX.

STRICHNINE.

WITH perhaps the exception of wolves, which cause such immense destruction among big game that their decrease by any means I should hold as justifiable, the mighty moose falling as easy a victim to their ravenous ferocity, as the smallest deer; I contend that the poisoning of animals should be regarded as wanton and unsportsmanlike. Unsportsmanlike, not in the usual acceptation of the term, to the mode of capture—for I can see no more sport in placing the instrument of death in front of the bait, than enclosing it within it. In fact, of the two modes, I consider that owing to the necessity of tracking up a poisoned animal for, sometimes, a couple of miles, more actual sport is thereby obtained, than in knocking it on the head with a stick while safely gripped in a trap, and of the two, poisoning is undoubtedly by far the most humane, for the animal's life terminates within twenty minutes, while with a foot jammed between iron jaws, it suffers untold agonies for perhaps ten days ere the traps are visited, though five seem to me quite sufficient to be allowed to elapse between inspections. But the true reason why poisoning is unsportsmanlike and wantonly destructive, is the fact of its being utterly impossible to place it about without creating serious havoc among animals which are never recovered. No one can honestly declare, that he has systematically used poison without destroying a large percentage of fur which he never gathered. Two constantly present evils, which spread death around broadcast, are heavy snowfalls and such birds as ravens, owls, jays, and whiskey jacks. After even a moderate fall of snow all previous tracks are obliterated, and the dead are consequently lost, but the universal presence of the birds causes even greater destruction; suppose for instance, one of the numerous keen scented quick-eyed ravens, ever on the search for food, discovers the bait, should it be too heavy for him to carry away bodily, he will take his fill and fly off into the nearest timber, where death soon overtakes him, and there he lies at the foot of some tree, offering his carcase as a tempting last meal to the first animal discovering it, the certain result is the death of that animal. The smaller birds, such as jay, &c., would frequently have swallowed insufficient poison, to cause the death of any large animal eventually feeding on them, the result in such cases being that their fur is ruined, the effect of the small quantity of poison taken, causes them to become mangy, patchy and utterly valueless. Heavy as this list of casualties is, the work of wholesale destruction by no means ceases here, for each dead animal is again preyed on by its comrade or another, which obtains sufficient unexhausted poison from the stomach to cause death, and this may be repeated several times until the original dose has become so diminished that the last feeder escapes with a ruined constitution and the

loss of its coat. Surely such a tale of woe is sufficient to stay the hand of even the most selfish. For the strict accuracy of what I have written I guarantee by pleading guilty to having tried the experiment; though should the result of my having done so prove the means of deterring others from following a bad example I shall feel somewhat compensated. On Uncle Billie I lay the burden of having initiated me into the poisioning of foxes, which he set about in the most reckless manner; sometimes on moving camp, never even troubling to pick up his baits. I well remember Bob Stewart's just indignation on making the discovery that Uncle Billie had been poisoning. He told him there and then that if while trapping he ever came across him using poison he would cause him to lose every horse he possessed. The sale of poison, in the interest of human lives, is fortunately prohibited to Indians, though some unscrupulous free-traders have provided them with it; and I look forward to the day when it shall become illegal for any unauthorised person to have it in his possession, for I think I have clearly shown the incalculable damage and loss inseparable from its use.

A SPORTSMAN'S OUTFIT.

TO procure a suitable outfit is naturally the preliminary to a sporting expedition, and a matter of no small difficulty to one who has little idea of what will be required. In offering practical suggestions, I shall leave the reader to choose to a great extent what he pleases, only mentioning the few things I consider absolutely necessary, and others which I have found most serviceable; at the same time, if he takes my advice, he will burden himself with no more than he actually needs, all superfluous articles are greatly in the way, being probably never utilised throughout the trip. As I carry back my memory to a spot many thousands of miles distant, and mentally glance round the walls of what was once my hunting shanty, the first thing that catches my eye, and I am convinced the most charming and useful weapon of modern times is Holland's Paradox gun, even if you lose all your baggage never let this out of sight, for having once experienced its utility, you will never feel really at ease again with a simple shot gun when after birds in a country inhabited by big game, and where at the most unexpected moment you may come across a bear; for indeed nearly as many of these are stumbled on by chance as are likely to be found when hunting them, except you have a bait down, or are on the watch in the spring; then when, instead of the grouse you seek, the unexpected bear appears, you will feel thankful to Holland for an addition to your trophies, which but for his gun-rifle would have been lost to you for ever; and rely upon it, it will be indeed a tough grizzly which can resist the shock and penetration of a hollow bullet from the Paradox, which at 100 yards will go clear through it from shoulder to shoulder; nor will the ducks and grouse share a better fate with a shot cartridge. Many and many a time in former days have I returned with my rifle, empty-handed to a meatless camp, having put up grouse after grouse, most of which on similar occasions, after the possession of this weapon, I have been enabled to bring back with me, except of course when in the vicinity of big game, at which times they remained free, therefore I would advise in the first place the purchase of one of Holland and Holland's

Paradox guns, with as many bullets as are likely to be required, I prefer the hollow ones filled with beeswax. It is a common error to start with many more cartridges than will be needed, as at the best game is not found every day; yet we see persons set out with cartridges enough to average ten shots daily—the amount of animals they propose to slaughter in imagination must be gigantic. In the case of the Paradox, a mould might be taken and a limited supply of bullets, they are very simple to cast, and fix into the ordinary paper twelve-bore shells, a crimper is also necessary. I should likewise take a 500 Express or something smaller if preferred. Two rifles I consider necessary, as one is always liable to be damaged and rendered useless by a fall or perhaps lost in a river. As to shot guns, I should recommend something between a four and twelve bore if geese or swans are likely to be met with, of course if expense is no object, take what you please only you will in all probability find at the end of your trip that you have stuck to the same gun and rifle the whole time. If you propose to load your cartridges in America, be sure and bring the powder from England, that obtained in America is useless trash as a rule, though English imported powder can be procured in British Columbia.

A stout canvas case for each gun and rifle will save many a bruise. A revolver or pistol, except for defence against the human animal, is a useless and unnecessary weapon. A good hunting and skinning knife are necessary, the most serviceable and convenient of the former is supplied by Thornhill, and can be used when closed for skinning and when full length for sticking, it fits into a leather sheath, and is more handy and neat than those I have seen by other makers; the skinning knife should be made of softer steel, taking a quicker and rougher edge, a suitable weapon of this description called the Green River knife can be procured at Silver's, London. Two knives carried in the belt will be found none too many, for when skinning large animals, they blunten quickly and require constant sharpening, for which purpose it is well to carry in the pocket a small whetstone four inches by two, or you will find yourself reduced to rasping your knife on the nearest rock, which is scarcely a desirable mode of putting on an edge. When at Silver's, you will be shown many necessary and most useful articles, and a great many more the reverse, so I would advise the turning of a deaf ear to the persuasions of the foreman, and an order being given for the following:—

First a canteen. If required for more than three persons it can be made to order, and see for yourself that all the knives and forks are rivetted through, and that the apparent brass rivets are not shams as mine were, or in a couple of months, your cutlery will be annoying you at each meal by performing every conceivable evolution, the knives twisting on one side on attempting to cut with them, until finally in company with the forks they will decline to remain in the handles at all; also when your canteen first arrives pay a little attention to the relative position of the contents while taking them out; or you will find that during your entire trip you will never have sufficient spare time to replace them all, with the result that some useful article will get lost.

A compass is indispensable, and if carefully heeded will save many a miserable night spent on some bleak mountain side. It is as well to fasten it round the neck, or the first time you are lost you will remember having forgotten to bring it out with you.

A good pair of field glasses are very necessary, a telescope almost useless, the field being so small.

A convenient sized gutta-percha flask covered with baize holds about one-and-a-half bottles, and if you propose drinking spirits, by all means bring what you fancy from England with you.

An automatic 12-ft. tape will be found useful, especially when an unusually large animal is killed and its dimensions may be required for the naturalist, or for one's own satisfaction, were this more generally carried we should hear of fewer monster specimens roughly estimated at twice their size.

A valise in which all bedding and wearing apparel can be securely packed, and which is so arranged, that by filling it with grass, moss, or anything handy, it provides a suitable bed, is by far the best and simplest substitute for the portmanteau of civilisation.

Ridiculous as it may appear, I should recommend among the camp outfit a large carriage umbrella, the services of which have been clearly demonstrated to me on many occasions; for much against my will, never having possessed such an article myself for the last fifteen years, one found its way into our camp, needless to say it was the property of a woman which thus thrust its gampish presence among us; yet somehow on drenching days that umbrella was certain to be seen spread aloft over the head of some man while endeavouring to dry his saturated clothes in front of the camp fire; at other times it shielded the baking bread in the frying-pan, and on many occasions it did duty for a sail in the canoe; thus one of the most unsportsman-like articles so forced its utility upon me, that I feel bound to include it in the outfit.

A canvas bucket and convertible washing-stand, which also forms a camp stool, are very useful and compact.

After leaving Silver's, I should suggest a visit to Cording's in Piccadilly;

An air bed is a luxury, strong and reliable; and if by any means one division should be burst (it should be made in three compartments), cut a slit, and fill it with anything soft you can get hold of; a pair of gouty-looking cloth boots with golosh bottoms are a great comfort in a wet or snowy camp, also a thin macintosh cape is of frequent service.

India-rubber gloves lined with flannel are good for setting traps with, and in the early winter, or when the snow is wet, they will be found far pleasanter to fall on than the bare hands or a woollen glove, for constantly plunging the arm up to the elbow in wet snow is cold work, and without these gloves most uncomfortable; they are also invaluable while skinning in moderately cold weather.

An occasional wash is sometimes indulged in, and for this purpose a collapsible india-rubber bath is handy, though an excellent substitute can be constructed with a mackintosh sheet spread over four posts, about fifteen inches long, driven half way into the ground. After being pressed down in the centre, the overlapping sides of the sheet should be pulled tight and fastened round the tops of the posts with string. When using an air-bed a waterproof sheet is quite unnecessary for keeping off the damp, though it will be found useful in many other ways, especially when taking a light outfit for a night or so, on a short trip, when the air-bed would be too heavy to pack.

Two good blankets will be required, while a Buffalo robe, which is perhaps the warmest thing going, can be obtained in America, but it is heavy, dirty, and cumbersome.

In respect to boots, I should recommend a pair similar to field boots, and another pair of ordinary walking boots, each nailed, but no stouter than is necessary to hold hobnails. Of course, in winter no one dreams of wearing boots, mocassins, besides being most comfortable and convenient for stalking, prevent the feet from freezing, which would be the result of wearing ordinary boots.

A good supply of the thickest socks and stockings will be needed; while for ordinary autumn hunting I know of nothing more satisfactory or comfortable than the cheapest description of lawn-tennis shoes, costing about 2*s.* 6*d.* a pair. Three or four pairs of these should be taken, for they soon wear out.

Clothing.—One stout frieze coat and two pairs of breeches lined with thin flannel, of a light drab colour, as being the least conspicuous; they should be loose about the knee. Waistcoats I look upon as uncomfortable and useless. In their place I wear hunting shirts of a pattern of my own, made of a mixture of something between cloth and flannel. They are supplied by Guthrie, Cork Street, Bond Street, and require no coat, unless preferred. In cold weather I put on two or three of these, one over the other. Plenty of woollen gloves, and a pair of sheepskin gloves, such as are used for hedging, are serviceable in cold climates. Should you be a hunting man harden your heart, and have a pair of leathers enlarged at and below the knee; you will find them most satisfactory.

CAMP OUTFIT.

UNLESS you have set your heart on something very luxurious do not bring a tent out with you, but purchase one at the nearest large town to your proposed hunting-ground. Good and light ones are to be had in most places. Avoid the bell-tent; the most serviceable is the A-shape, for which you cut your own poles on the camping-ground. If you have no objection to a rather heavy article a Dutch-oven is very useful, otherwise the frying-pan does very well for baking bread in, though a new invention called a reflector is portable, and bakes well I am told. Two or three pots and pans are needed, also a coffee-pot, which, with an axe and shovel, should complete the outfit. All these items should be obtained at the last town within the precincts of civilisation, unless it is known that some store exists in closer proximity to the hunting-ground, as is the case between Custor and the Big Horn Mountains.

Various.—Small saw for dividing heads, strong leather belt, carrier holding eight rifle cartridges, string, glove, and packing-needles; thread, buttons, wax, an assortment of fishing-tackle, including large trout-flies and rod, for, even if you do not care for the sport, fish will be found a most acceptable addition to the larder, and if you were previously no lover of the art it will be strange if the hooking and playing of a few such trout as exist in certain of the American streams and lakes do not convert you into an enthusiastic fisherman for the future.

I know of no really satisfactory mode of carrying a rifle when mounted, for owing to its length and the smallness of the horses the cavalry-regulation style is usually impracticable, which leaves the choice of three ways, all more or less inconvenient, namely, slung in the ordinary manner across the rider's back, in which position, in the event of a buck or fall, his brains are liable to be scattered by it; across the saddle-bow, fixed by a leather flap to the pommel, where, in passing through timber, constant attention is required to avoid a breakage; or, thirdly, in a leather bucket, so attached to the saddle that, when mounted, the rider's leg hangs outside the rifle, the stock of which is in front of his knee, while the muzzle points obliquely to the rear, the rifle lying close to the horse's side. This is the plan I always adopted

myself, though I found it produced a painful strain on the knee at first. Unless an abomination of an American saddle is preferred a substitute should be brought out from England.

HOW TO PROCURE HUNTERS AND SERVANTS.

HE who meditates his first trip will naturally, if unaided, feel at a loss as to how to procure suitable servants to accompany him on the hunt. If his route lies in the Rockies of the United States, he must become acquainted with the address of some reliable hunter, whom he should engage by letter, many months in advance, giving him instructions to procure a suitable outfit of pack horses and men, two men will be necessary, one to cook, and the other to look after the horses; the hunter will expect not less than £1 a day, and the other men about half that sum each; nor must the novice feel surprised if his hunter claims him as an equal, and commences by calling him by his surname, minus, a prefix, for he must bear in mind that he is now in the land of grand equality; no greater mistake can be made than to take out a servant from England, especially if his services were of value there; this applies equally to British Columbia. It appears utterly beyond their powers to resist the levelling characteristics of the country, and the first and early intimation that your hitherto immaculate servant has lost his national respect will be to see him familiarly shaking hands with your personal friends, and omitting to call them "sir;" very shortly too, a supremely insolent air will take sole possession of him, and if you refrain from discharging him on the spot, it will only be because you are unable to dispense with his immediate services; in any case he will never again become the respectful servant of the past. Added to which he will be so thoroughly out of his element as to prove of litttle real use, at all events in America, where experienced men are always at hand; though in British Columbia, where one is solely dependent on the Indians, except in the more civilised regions, if you can tolerate his newly acquired insolence, after having had to teach him everything, from building a fire, to frying a piece of meat, you may find him an agreeable substitute for an Indian.

In British Columbia, as far as I am aware, nothing can be done to further a hunting trip until the proposed destination is reached, when the Hudson Bay Company will provide invaluable and willing assistance.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

THE following practical suggestions if borne in mind and carried out will frequently prove of considerable assistance to the novice:—

Never even dream of realizing the picture of sport drawn by your best friend, 'tis but a sportsman's mirage, and will, if indulged in, lead you on from one disappointment to another. Previously to starting on your trip appoint some agent on the coast, to whom you can address your trophies, and who will forward them home for you, as owing to the difficulty or impossibility of booking them through, you will otherwise run great risks of never again setting eyes on the beloved objects.

By hunting alone, unless impracticable, the loss is slight and the gain considerable, one person makes half the noise of two and is far less conspicuous, no ill-timed remark can be made at the very moment when perfect silence is indispensable. On an emergency prompt action is decided upon without the necessary and probably fatal delay arising from a consultation, while the sportsman is placed in every respect more at his ease by independence of action, and brings down a third more game than he would do if accompanied by a companion.

Arrange some code of signals with your camp, such as two shots in rapid succession, meaning you require immediate assistance, &c.

Lose no time in following a wounded bear, as in a dense country you must rely entirely on keeping it in sight, they seldom bleed much, the fat effectually plugging up the bullet hole, therefore without a dog except on snow or mud, to track them is next to impossible. A bear's skin is worthless between May and September.

Never allow an Indian to carry a rifle while hunting with you, nor to carry yours in the vicinity of game, or he will take the first shot instead of you.

Avoid any quick movement when coming suddenly on game, rather spend half a minute in raising your rifle than do so hurriedly, restrain the inclination to duck down, by slowly sinking out of sight if need be, should you see nothing but females and young in a herd by which you may suddenly find yourself surrounded, remain perfectly motionless, even if they are looking directly at you, they will probably, under such conditions, resume their previous occupations, when you will have an opportunity of catching sight of the male, or making what arrangement you think best.

Always aim so as to put your bullet through the shoulder blade; failing the practicability of this, through or as near the spine as possible is good, so is the neck, but it spoils the skin for setting up; a stomach shot is bad, though eventually fatal, yet the chances are you lose an animal so wounded.

A bear nearly always stands erect before an attack, in which position, a shot near the centre of the neck kills him dead.

Avoid alarming a wounded animal, unless in a dying condition, rather leave the tracking of it until to-morrow.

Utilise a rising or setting sun, by placing yourself between it and the game you are stalking, they can see you no better than you could them under similar conditions.

Shoot only at what you intend to retain as a trophy or require for food, bearing in mind, at least for the sake of those who come after you, that had this rule been adhered to, you would be now enjoying far finer and more varied sport than is falling to your lot, and that when you return home boasting of the quantity you have slain, you but provoke a smile of disdain on the lips of every true sportsman.

Open the stomach of an animal and extract the intestines before leaving it, if required for food, and put a stick with a handkerchief tied to the end, or lay a few branches in an unnatural position over the carcase, to keep off the wolves, &c., during the night; in severe cold, the meat should be cut into portable portions at once.

Avoid the selection of a foggy day for hunting, or you may experience considerable difficulty in discovering your camp again.

During a thaw, when the snow is falling from the trees, deer are always nervous and on the look out, which renders them excessively difficult to approach at such times.

Never postpone securing a head because you are assured you will see plenty more later on, it frequently happens that the neglected opportunity does not occur again.

Hunt from daybreak till 10 o'clock and rest till 3, then resume your hunt till dusk.

Do not overpay hunters, more especially Indians, ascertain the usual price and give no more, otherwise it comes hard on a poorer man following in your tracks, for the price, if once raised, is never reduced again.

SKINNING.

AVOID leaving this important business to another, as the necessary care and trouble is only likely to be undertaken by yourself. Anyone can skin; but the difference between what you have done yourself, and that which you have left to the tender mercies of another, will be at once apparent when you cast your eyes around your hall a year later, and behold the noble heads; each one recalling some thrilling memories of a successful stalk, and while you gaze lovingly on a certain magnificent pair of antlers, the whole of that successful day's tramp flashes back on you, and you see yourself still standing with thumping heart triumphantly gloating over your prize, perhaps with a queer amalgamation of pain and pleasure at so noble a beast's death, until, with an effort, you pull yourself together, devoutly wishing you were on the hunt again; but what I intended to say was, that you will observe in these heads, in spite of Rowland Ward's, or any other taxidermist's art, a marked difference between those you so carefully tended, and others recklessly gashed for you by someone else. A little care is all that is required; we will suppose a deer lying before you, the head of which you are anxious to preserve, in the first place, no head looks well without plenty of neck, this is an important matter much neglected, therefore, insert your long knife, open to its full extent, under the skin between the shoulders, and run it straight up the back of the neck, ceasing when its point is between the antlers, then return to where you commenced, and cut down to and across the chest on both sides, now commence to skin the neck with your skinning knife, taking care to clean as close to the skin as possible, avoid causing more blood to run than you can help; you have now the skin of the neck separated as far as the cheeks, the next thing to be done is to detach the head, in the case of a wapiti or moose, you will possibly need assistance, indeed in all probability you will have required it before this, to turn the animal over, supposing you have the requisite aid, insert your knife from the back of the neck into the spinal column, just where the spine connects with the skull, when on the right spot, you will find the knife slip in with ease, divide all obstructions of flesh and sinews on each side, now separate the skin from the throat and the sides of the tongue from the jaws, then taking one antler and your comrade the other, twist the head right round with force, and before the circle is completed all you require will have come away, leaving the tongue attached to the carcase; now either carry the head back to camp, or, if more convenient, hang it on the fork of a tree, out of the reach of any animal, to be brought in on the morrow, and when you have it safely in camp, lose no more time than is necessary in removing the skin from the head and face. To effect this make two cuts from the antlers, to meet the extremity of the first cut up the neck; these cuts will not be over two inches

in length. Now very carefully separate the skin from round the antlers, taking care not to cut off or leave any hair attached to the antlers, proceed to skin the face, taking the ears out by the roots as it were, that is to say, leaving the gristly substance intact, as when that is cut straight through you can see directly to the skull, which causes the stuffer much trouble and never looks well. Now keep a sharp look-out for the eye, by placing a finger under the lid, or you will be into it before you are aware of its proximity, and such cuts can never be properly effaced. Next you come to an awkward gland below the eye which must be cut out entire. Having accomplished this, place your finger in the corner of the mouth and skin away until you come to it, then cut through the thin part until you see the teeth, and separate the lips from the gums. It will now be time to attend to the nose; when you come to the gristle, which you must try with the knife or you may imagine it to be bone, cut straight down into it, until you reach the top of the fore-part of the upper jaw. Nothing more remains to be done, except to separate the nose and lips carefully from the bone, and the same with the lower jaw. Supposing you are not alone, and for fear your companion may feel neglected, hand him the skull and antlers with instructions to detach the lower jaw. In the event of its being a large species of deer, the skull should be sawn through from between the antlers to the extremity of the nose, leaving half the skull attached to each antler, this greatly facilitates packing, and is little hindrance to the naturalist who finally sets up the head.

In all cases where you intend having an entire head set up it is very necessary to preserve the skull, otherwise a model has to be made, which is alike imperfect and expensive. Should you desire only to retain the antlers, always leave a portion of the skull attached to them, otherwise they are difficult to fix; having handed over the skull all that it needs is that every particle of matter foreign to the bone should be removed; you will now have a more tedious business to perform yourself with the mask, remove thoroughly all fat and meat from the skin, when you come to the nose cut away all superfluous gristle, divide the outside from the inside of the lips by running the knife between them in order that they may more readily dry, do not cut away that portion which is covered with little spikes, as this is needed when setting up, having removed everything you can from the skin, apply powdered alum to the nose, mouth, eyes and ears; having the skin inside out, and the gristle of the ears pulled through to its full extent, hang your mask across a stick in a dry airy spot apart from the heat of either fire or sun. Your object is to dry as quickly as possible without the aid of heat; when the exposed gristle of the ears has become considerably dried, push it back to its natural position, or the double pleat of skin may rot, but if the weather is very wet, and the hair shows signs of slipping, apply alum on each side well rubbed in, and, if absolutely necessary, place at a distance from the fire: during the process of drying arrange the skin in as flat a position as possible, or when you come to pack several masks you will find they take up a great deal of unnecessary room, and be also careful that when packed the sharp hard corners of one skin do not rest on the hair of another, or, by the time they reach England, a bald patch will be the result, and the masks spoilt. Never pack antlers and skins together; mark each mask and skull so that you will know which belongs to which. Do not be surprised if a moderate tweak breaks the hair off a deer, it is usually so with them, some more than others, especially the antelope. Superintend the packing of your trophies: a hole in the case large enough for a mouse to enter, may cause the

ruin of many skins. Make quite certain when dispatching your case, that you have done all in your power to insure its ultimate delivery. I once lost five wapiti heads, fortunately only the skulls and antlers, for over a year, after having taken every possible precaution, through the supposed negligence of the railway officials, the actual cause I never discovered, but at the expiration of that time, I had traced the case to New York, and back again to the Rocky Mountains, where it was eventually recovered, and I considered myself fortunate in ever securing it. The directions given above for skinning and preserving a deer's head, will apply equally well to every description of horned animal.

Bears.—Cut up the stomach from tail to throat; from inside tail to heel joint at the back of hindlegs; cut down foreleg at the back to meet stomach, cut at right angles. Two or three can work together at a bear, but the skin is much more delicate than would be supposed. The head you had better undertake yourself, treating it in much the same manner as the deer's. Leave the feet attached to the skin until you get to camp, as to remove them is a tedious business. If you wish to preserve them for a mat (and to my mind a mat with the head and feet on is twice as handsome as a dismembered skin), you must cut away the soles of the feet and remove all bone and flesh up to the claws. If required for stuffing the soles must be left intact, and the flesh of the feet removed by cutting along the skin at one side of the soles. Should you have killed your bear in the autumn make no attempt to remove all fat from the skin until you have reached camp, and can conveniently stretch it, otherwise you will give yourself much extra trouble for nothing. In the spring there is little or no fat, when the skin can be cleaned in a quarter of the time. Having roughly hauled Bruin's coat off and brought it into camp, set to work to remove the fat; then, if the weather is dry, peg out the skin and stretch to its full extent on the ground, or better, lace it to a large square frame, composed of four large poles lashed together. Cut and scrape every atom of fat off the skin, as each particle left will cause the hair over it to slip; to do this thoroughly is an entire day's work. Having cleaned the skin and used a plentiful supply of alum on the feet and head, place it on the frame in some airy situation, with the head turned inside out. The Indians usually fix their bears on willows, but by this method they seriously lacerate the edges of the skin.

Supposing your bear to have been killed in the autumn, secure all the fat, which will keep through the winter, and prove excellent for cooking purposes. Look constantly to the ears of the bear; they are, in conjunction with those of other animals, difficult to dry. You will find the skull easier to clean if boiled, but be careful not to overboil it, or the bones may separate.

In the fur trade all animals' skins are known as cased or open, cased implying that but one cut is made in a skin, running at the back of the hindlegs from one hind-foot to the other, and passing immediately beneath the tail. The skin is then drawn off inside out, and stretched by inserting a flat board, so shaped as to completely fill out the skin, and sawn through down the centre in order that a wedge may be inserted to prize it open until the skin is strained perfectly tight, the fur being inside and the hindlegs either tacked or strapped to each half of the board. As soon as the skin is dry the board is removed.

Open skins are split up the stomach from tail to lip, down the back of the forelegs, rather inclining to the inside to meet the stomach-cut, and down the back of hindlegs

in the same manner. The skin is then either pegged open on the dry ground, nailed to some flat surface, or laced, tightly stretched to a wooden frame. The latter is the only method I should advise.

One animal—the beaver—is never cased, but tightly laced to an oval frame, constructed by binding together the overlapping extremities of a stout willow-stick, and shaving down such portions as, by their extra size and strength, tend to throw the oval out of shape. In skinning a beaver, save round the feet and tail, where the hair ceases, but one cut is made and that along the stomach from tail to lip.

Any fur-bearing animals of which the sportsman may become possessed, if worth saving at all, will be required for one of four purposes, either for stuffing or making into mats, rugs, or trimmings. For stuffing the most careful skinning is required, and no more incisions than absolutely necessary should be made. Most animals little larger than a fox should be cased. The more shapeless they are the more adaptable to this form of treatment, but care must be taken not to stretch the skin beyond its natural size. The forelegs can generally be pulled through right up to the toe-joints; but, failing this, let any extra cut be made in the least conspicuous place, and where the hair is thickest. Remove or cut away nothing save what is within the skin. In skinning thin skinned animals, such as lynxes and foxes, use a knife only when absolutely necessary, a slip of wood as a substitute will save many an awkward gash. To extract the bone of the tail, push back the skin for an inch, and insert the stump in the split end of a half-inch stick, by grasping both ends of this, with one hand on each side of the firmly wedged stump, and pulling steadily, the entire bone will slip out. Then with a sharp-pointed knife split the skin the whole way up the tail from underneath, otherwise if thickly furred the hair is almost sure to slip. Always save the skulls of animals required for setting up. For skinning larger animals which require to be opened, proceed as directed with the bear.

For rugs, should several skins be required joined together, stretch them open in as perfect a square as possible, bearing in mind that it is useless to strain one place wider than another. The legs may be cut off short.

For mats intended to be made from a single skin, stretch open as with bear, saving the skull or upper jaw.

For trimmings, always case your skins; should you desire the fur outside, reverse them by commencing at the nose.

Some people are averse to alum but I have been unable to discover any harm in it, and by its use have saved many trophies, though it should only be applied to the feet, ears and lips of small animals which very seldom require it at all.

WHEN TO SHOOT DEER AS TROPHIES.

THE antlers of all North American Deer are in their primest condition towards the end of September, but it is very necessary for the hunter to bear in mind that some deer drop them much earlier than others.

There are at least seven different species of Deer within comparatively easy reach, though the barren ground caribou are rather far north. They come in the following

order as regards size. 1. The moose or elk is the largest deer in the world, they drop their antlers about January, though in common with most deer the young carry them for a longer period. 2. The wapiti, carrying the most magnificent antlers of all deer, do not drop them until April. 3. The woodland caribou of which the females have small antlers, drop them as early as November, but the females carry theirs until May. Of the period at which (4) the mule deer, (5) the black-tailed deer, found only along the Pacific Coast, and (6) the common Virginian or white-tailed deer, drop their antlers, I have no accurate knowledge, but they may be relied on up to a late date. 7. The barren ground caribou, the smallest of North American deer, carry enormous antlers for their size, and drop them probably at the same time as the woodland caribou, like which the females also are armed,

The antelope or prong buck, though not a deer, sheds its horns about October, at which period the new horn is considerably advanced. The females have small horns.

SHOOTING.

IT is a very general error to suppose that an accurate eye is the origin of a good shot, times out of number have I heard some such remark as the following: "I am surprised you play billiards no better, being a good shot, you must have a very straight eye." The speaker apparently imagined that the eye bore the most important part in a successful game of billiards. My opinion is that the eye takes a third-rate place in shooting, by far the most prominent part being performed by the brain, the hand and eye conforming thereto, except in rifle shooting at a fixed or slowly moving object. I treat a bird flying directly away horizontally with the shooter's head as a fixed object in which case the eye is sufficient; but for quickly moving objects taking any other direction the brain has momentarily to decide what position the object will have attained by the time the trigger has been pulled, and the necessary interval has elapsed before the shot can reach it. Such a calculation can only be successfully arrived at by constant practice and observation. For rapid shooting the hand must be so accurately trained as to act independently of the eye, which, when the gun is fired, perhaps a quarter of a second ere it reaches the shoulder, cannot possibly indicate to the shooter whether his aim requires correcting or no. Yet so accurate does the hand become, that a good shot seldom fails to bowl over his rabbit when the eye has only had time to announce the animal's presence. The easiest shot, and that invariably sought by the novice, is an object going directly away from him, for the successful stopping of which, only one sense, the eye is necessary; but the real pleasure and perfection of game shooting is only arrived at when the brain is called into requisition, and the shooter has to fire eight or nine feet, or perhaps more away from the bird, in order to secure it. The majority of sportsmen are good shots at twenty-five yards, but few have acquired perfection at forty. I have never been able to arrive at a definite conclusion as to how far one does actually fire in front of a bird, but it is simply a mathematical problem. Some have told me they allowed a yard on a certain occasion, whereas I should have imagined myself to have trebled the distance had the shot fallen to my lot. A few declare that they fire point blank at

their birds ; but some people carry greater swing with their guns than others, or are quicker getting them off, to say nothing of misjudging the distance they really allow, so that no amount of calculation could define to each individual personally the correct allowance to make, practice being the only reliable trainer. I attach much importance to having a gun to suit in every way, one which comes up quickly, accurately, and with comfort ; without such a weapon we stand a great chance of remaining indifferent shots to the end of our days.

FOXES.

A MARKED difference of opinion seems to exist concerning the origin of silver, cross and red foxes. The general, I may say universal impression of those persons interested in the fur trade of British Columbia is that they are all descended from one and the same species. This struck me as a most unreasonable decision to have arrived at, and I can only imagine that this conclusion has been jumped to from the fact of a litter of either silver, cross, or red foxes occasionally containing cubs of all three variations. This to my mind is easily accounted for by the promiscuous crossing which takes place between these American foxes. From general observation I have little doubt that these three varieties, which are again subject to such variations in colour and marking as to defy any direct classification, are descended from two distinct species, namely the silver or black fox and the red fox, a direct cross between the two resulting in the true cross fox, so named on account of the dark cross on the shoulders. To my mind the difference in the size of the feet alone should stamp the silver as being a separate species from the red ; but whenever a discussion arose on the subject amongst the Hudson Bay Company officers, though to a certain extent my theory was acknowledged as probable, we never could entirely agree. It was the same with the wolves which I believe to be descended from three distinct species, namely, black, white and grey. As regards the foxes, if descended from a common origin, the result would in all probability be an even distribution of silver cross and red, whereas this is by no means the case, red being plentiful, cross less so, and silver or black comparatively rare, which would be the natural result of a cross between a common and an uncommon animal. It is also a matter of note that the cross fox varies in colour and marking to a far greater extent than the silver or red, through interbreeding among themselves, while the others seem to retain their originality. It is also, I believe, a fact that in certain parts of America where the red fox is plentiful, the others are unknown.

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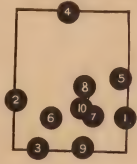
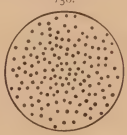


Shot Pattern (Right). 150.



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